

THE
PRAISE AND DISPRIZE
OF WOMEN.

Gathered out of sundry authours, as wel Sacred as Propheticall, with plentie of wonderfull examples, whereoff some are new and nevheard off before, as by the principall notes in the Masses, gent may ap-
peare.

written in the French tongue
and brought into our
vulgar tongue.

Reade it and judge.

These fables were written by Cyprianus

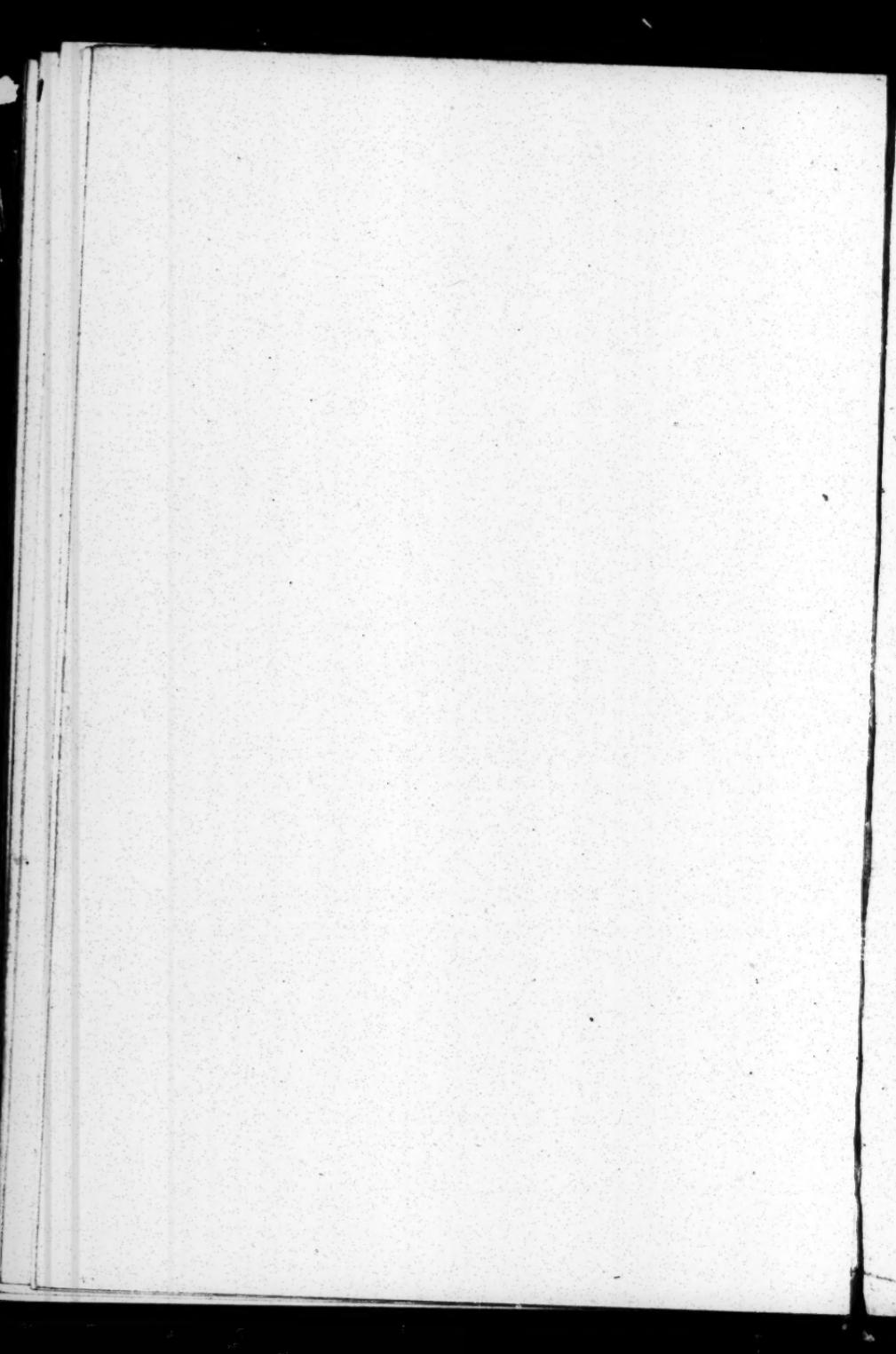
for the entertainment of his friends.

Book the first. Chapter 25.

I will rather dwell with a Lyon and a
D-1234, then to keape house with a
wicked wife. Extract cap. 35.

Imprinted at London for

William Pynson. 1579.



THE TRANSLATOR

to the Reader.



Entle Reader after that
I had bought this small
booke in French, (bee-
ing vrged therenvnto by
the importunitie of the
steller) not wayng nor
regarding the matter (as a thing of smal
value) I layde it vp amongst other
bookes of the same language, minding
at one time or other to peruse the same,
but as the common Proverbe is, out of
sight out of minde, and seldom seene,
soone forgotten: So came it to passe
with mee, vnmindfull of such matters
for a long season, vntill at the last, ha-
uing occasion among a company of olde
writings to search and seeke out a cer-
teine matter of importaunce, where a-
mong other things, this French booke
came vnto my hands, and laying it aside
vntil the next day, I founde time and
space to read it ouer. The which after I
had wel perused & sufficiētly wayed, I
foud the matter so pleasaūt & bewtified
with so many rare & wonderfull exam-

A.ij.

ples,

To the Reader;

ples, that therein I tooke a speciall pleasure & delight. And blaming mine own negligence and forgetfullnesse in letting so good a matter to slip so long vnviewed and perused; I thought it good in recompence of this my negligency, to lay all other matters aside, and to draw the same into our ouerigne tonge, which being now finished and ended, such as it is, I thought it good to impart the same unto thee gentle Reader, to the ende that thou mayst take thy pleasure therewm, & also beholde and see the wonderful ambare excellencies of women, far passing the same that hath ben heretofore. & on the contrary side, the filthie, lothly, and detestable doings of wicked women. All the which is filled and stored with strange and sundry examples, as well of antiquitie as of time present; that the lyke hath not bene seene. Except therfore I pray thee, highly思念 labour & tractaille herein; and in so doing, thou shalt encourage ~~to~~ to a farre greater matter, profit & helpe, by benefiting to the soyle of certaine old Englishmen. Farewell; and vñm of righte

¶ OF THE FIRST BEGIN-
ning and creation of a Woman , and
what Woman is to bee counted and
judged honest and vertuous , accor-
ding to the determination and judge-
ment of Philosophers,with an aun-
swere vnto the defamations wheres-
with Women are defamed and euill
spoken off.

Cap. I.



Lthough that Thucidas, whose skil in Philoso-
phie was no lesse, then
in the regiment and go-
vernance of his country
and common wealth .
(did judge & esteeme that woman honest
and vertuous) of whose prayse and dis-
prayse there is lyttle talke among men .
Because that euen as hir body ought al-
wayes, (or for the most part) be shut vp
and secret in hir chamber : So also hir
name and fame ought not so much as to
procede out of hir house, nor to be spred
abroad . Notwithstanding, Plutarch that
famous Philosopher, in discoursing of the
worthy and excellent qualties of woe

W. men

The praise, and

An erdi-
naunce of
the Ro-
manes.

men doth not altogether mislike this opinion of Thucidides, but being somewhat contrary w^t Georgias, he saith, þ the name (& not þ beautie of a woman) ought to be blased & spred in all places, according to þ example of þ ancient Romaines, þ which as wise & discreet men did publish a law, by which it was ordained, þ at þ burials & funerals of women, should be made De-
clarations & declarations, through þ which their god doings shold be known to their posteritic, as wel as þ doings of men. For they did esteime & judge it a thing against al reason, to hide þ honour & praise of þ which did merit & deserve it, frō þ which women ought not to bee debarred , no more then men. For it were a great ini-
tutie & contempt vnto their honoz & pro-
genie to keepe their praise in silence, & to bury it in the dungeon of obliuion.

But as for me, although I am the least as well in knowledge & understand-
ing as also of reputacion and name as
mong so many as haue taken in hande
to write in their prayses : Yet notwithstanding I will not leave off nor be dis-
couraged , after so many learned pens,
(that

(that haue bestowed some labour there-
in) to sette out by writing the most rare
excellencies that are to be found in that
kinde, to the ende that their glory may
be the more and more extellics. But
for to bring this to passe, it is needfull
for mee not onely to begin from the time
of Deucalion, but from the creation of
the first woman, to the ende that their
perfections may more and moze shewe and
be manifest.

First therefore, we may read in the
holy Scripture that after that the al-
mighty God had created Heaven and
Earth, and had made man according to
his Image and lykenesse, he sayd, that it
was not good that man shoulde be alone,
and therefore he caused a slumber to fall
vpon Adam, and as he slep̄ he toke a
ryb out of his side, and closed vp the flesh
in stede thereof, and with the same ryb
made he a woman, the which by Adam
was named Eva, the mother of all ly-
ving. For even as man is the Image
and glory of God, even so a woman is
the glory of the man. For man is not of
the woman, but the woman of the

Genes. 2

Cor. xii. 12

B.ij. man

The praise, and

man. And the man was not created for
the woman; but the woman for the man.
Neverthelesse the man cannot be with-
out the woman, in that she is the first ne-
cessary gift of reason, neither can the wo-
man be without the man because of the
procreation of children. For as the wo-
man came by the man, so lykewise man
is by the woman. And even herein, is
now occasion giuen me to answe vnto
the common quarrell wherewith wo-

An answer
to the quar-
rell that
men have a-
gainst vvo-
men.

men are wrongfully defamed & blamed, in
that it is sayde they haue corrupted and
spoiled the world. Also they are vnjustly
and falsly accused to haue beguiled man-

kinde, so that by them hath happened all
these alteracions and ruines. To this I
answe, that although it be not possi-
ble to worke a greater mischiefe then that
which Sathan wrought against the wo-
man, & through hit meanes hath brought
vpon the world, which is, that all man-
kinde by the corruption and fal of Adam,
haue lost that souereigne giste, which ac-
cording to the vnfallible wil of god (from
whence proceded the sufferaunce) should
haue bene giuen, that is, from immor-

tall

fall creatures we are become mortal and subject to all miseries and calamities.

But yet neverthelesse if this had not happened, the debilitye and weakenesse of Sathan shold never haue bene known in this world. For if Eva had not sinned, how shold the glory of god bene known and made manifest agaynst Sathan the Difyll. For this cause is it that the scripture saith, that the womans seede should tread downe the head of the serpent, who althoough he be mightie, and so mightie in deede that ther is no power nor strenght in this world, that is able to withstand him. Neverthelesse the seede proceeding from the woman hath vanquished and gotten the victory ouer him.

So now this chiefe and principall sin committed through the consent that the woman gaue vnto Sathan, was tourned by the miraculons power of God, so the most souereigne and greatest benefit that euer happened in the world. For Gods will and prouidence was, after that Sathan had wrought and done the most mischisfe that he could, that his imbecyltie & weakenesse shold be vanquished by the

The sinne
committed
by the wo-
man is cause
of a most so-
vereine be-
nefite for
man.

W. iii. woman

The praise, and

woman through whose seede he hath bene bound and destroyed, although he will continue lyke a roaring Lyon seeking whom he may devoure, and dayly stirring vp infinite mischieves against godly people, but therby procedeth a great and singular

**The bene-
fice that com-
meth by
patience**
profit, and that is patience, which benefit (with praier) is most necessary for man-kinde. For although many god and vertuous men have through y great assaults of sathan lost their lyves, yet hath it turned to their great profit, in that they are past y long troubles and miseries of this wretched world, for to rest in quietnesse. Likewise to the wicked it is to them aduaantage, in that they cease from their wicked doings whereby they are the less punished. Therefore we must no more cry out and say, that women haue lost and spoyled the worlde, for therein men are more to be blamed, in misusing the most excellent vertue and gift that God

**It is a great
shame to
men to let
themselves
be deceived
by women.**
hath giuen them, in that they cannot subdue nor bide their disordinate beastes & appetites, but suffer themselves like brute beasts without reason to be overcome and subiect to the most fraglest kinde.

Wherin

dispraise of VVomen. 4

Wherin women haue this aduaantage ouer men, that where as they are accus'd to haue bene the causers of many mischieves that are happened in the world, such men as by any meanes haue thus bene ouercommen by them doe merite and deserue much blame and shame, and are a great deale the more to be reprooued to let themselues thus to be vanquished and brought vnder by the perswasion of so fraile and brickle a kinde as the woman, & thereby they receiue much shame and dishonour: Insomuch as the man is more excellent and of more knowledge and understanding then the woman, by the meanes whereoff it is vnto him a most greate ignomie and reproch to suffer himselfe so to be abused and beguiled.

The Scripture saith, It is not good that man should be alone, lette vs make him a helper that may be present with him. Now this helper is the woman, who is(as we haue iayd already)the first benefit of knowledge to the man, for man should be els bat as halfe made, for it is vnpossible for man touching any perfection

Genes. 2

W.iiiij. that

The praise, and

that is in him, that he may engender po-
sterite, (which is the most souercigne be-
neſt & gift of this lyfe) without the behde
and company of the woman . Furthermore,
to whom shold God diſtribute his
graces if first and aboue all tynges trea-
tures the woman did not bring forth in-
to þ world a earthly body so to be made
heauenly, and as it is not ſufficient enely
that man & woman ſhould be ioyned to-
gether, but also þ ſuch a coniunction ſhould
be wholy, ſo, that the ſeare and luſtance
of the male, may be conioyned & brought
together with þ luſtance of the female:
to the ende that the wouian compaffe the
man, & that þ masculyne nature may bee
ioyned with þ feminine. For God, by the
leſſer force & power, will, (for the enter-
ing of his glory) the rather manifest him-
ſelfe the moze exellent, then by his grea-
teſt power & might. And by this meaner,
he thought it god to confound the ſatba-
niall power . By this ye may ſee, that
those things which the enemyes and
bytrayders of the feminine kinde, theught,
had made for þ purpose againſt women,
is contrariwile turned to þ praise of the

By vwhat
meaneſ god
hath con-
founded
Sathan

Sæing

Being also, that the holy writers them-
selues, doe altogether, holde opinion, and
saye, that the sinne and transgression
of Adam was necessary, and they call it
a most happy fall and transgression, that
hath merited and deserved such a god and
gracious a redeemer. But for the conclu-
sion of this matter, notwithstanding that
the woman, seemeth to bee a weake ves-
sell and vnsatiable, yet, if we will more ex-
actly consider their excellencies and per-
fections, we may gaze and wonder at her,
as at a rich and costly shopp, furnished
with all pleasures. (In whome doth
shine the beames of the Divine sapiro-
ence) And wher shall finde them endur-
ed with more greater dignitie and pre-
eminence then man, vndigne God cre-
ated of an Element grosse and heauy, (that
is) euuen of the filthy and soule stoddy of
earth and of the fieme thereof. But he
made woman of the flesh and ribbe of a
man, being purifid; living; and having
soule, to the ende that by their kindes
and natura: mixed together; they might
multiply, and by the multitude of the
same, replenish the earth. The creatio
of h vros
man more
excellente
then the
mans.

B. b. This

The praise, and

This therefore doth sufficiently declare and make manifest, that the celestiall giftes and graces, haue in no poinke bene denied to the woman, but distributed and giuen to them more plentifullly and haboundantly then to the man.

¶ Of the great and goodly priuiledges that from time to time hath bene giuen to woman.

Cap.2.

The vro.
man vvas
made in
Paradise &
the man
yeakeout.
etate & so
at the same
perillous
time.

If the woman had no moze but this onely aduaantage & preheminence aboue the man that shee was made & formed in Paradise terrestiall, and man out of the same. This onely perfection doth excell althose that man may haue, and is more then sufficient to stop the mouth of all euill speakers and detractors of semine kynde. But besides this, the woman hath so many other sayre and excellent priuiledges, that it would require Hercules labour to reparate them all, neuerthelesse I will enclose in this place, the most rarest and notablest, and that may best serue

serue to their decortion, to the ende that it may be knowne that they are not vn-
equarell to men, in dignitie, excellencie, vice
tesy, and in other vertues.

First to beginne, it is most certeine and
sure, that there was never committed a
more haynous and grievous sinne, then
that which was committed in the Jewes,
in putting to death & crucifying the
uiour of the world, the which by men was
most wrongfully committed and done, but
as touchinge the women, they neither
gaue consent, counsell nor helpe, in the
matter, but did what in them lay to hind-
der the same with all their power and
might, as it appeareth and remanifest in
the Gospell; that maketh mencion of Pa-
lates wife, that sent to her husband to turne
him, and to forbid him from such a dis-
loyall and unlawfull judgement, against
an innocent and iust person. In whenselv
whereof, our Saviour beinge risen ag-
aine: did first appeare and shewe him-
selfe vnto women, that they might be
the first messengers and spreadders Math. 28
boade of his Resurrection and Glo-
rye.

A prais of
þ ywoman
that vvoid-
not consente
to þ deaþ
of Christ.

Math. 27

But

The praise, and glorie

But if we wil haue witnessess of auicis-
The priu-
lege of
wvomen to
give name
to their
children.
Genes.25.
Exodus.1.
Math.25
Deutro.20.
sent memory of the priuiledges of wo-
men, we read in the booke of Genesis,
that they had this priuiledge, to giue
names unto their children, as it appea-
reth by Lea and Rachel, Jacobs wifes,
that gaue names themselves unto their
children. As of the wife of Monoah, the
Mother of Sampson, that gaue the name
unto his sonne Sampson, as appeareth in
the booke of Judges.13. Chapter.

Other pri-
uiledges of
wvomen.
Exod.1.
Math.25
Deutro.20.

When Pharaio king of Aegypt, com-
maunded that all the male chil-
dren should be slaine, he gaue expresse charge, to pre-
serue the females, even as Herode gaue
commaundement to kill all the male chil-
dren under the age of two yeares, but
he did attempt nothing againe the female
kinde. And by lyke priuiledges in times
past, women wer preserued in the expug-
nation of Townes, Cities, and Castles,
that were taken by the force of warre,
where the men were slaine, but the wo-
men pardoned. And not onely the wo-
men did enioye these faire priuiledges,
but in the fauour and pitie of them, the
new maried men were exempted and free
from

from going to the warres; yea, although
that cities were in extreme daunger, and
al for the loue of their new married wife.
Now that the female kinde haue alwaies
bene pruiledged , it appeareth by these
former examples. And not chely amonc
reasonable creatures , but also amonc
those that are altogether deprivid of the
gist of reason. It appeareth in the lawes
of Moses , by the which when any one
had founde a birdes nest , either in the
fielde or in any tree, if that he founde the
female sitting in y nest, it was not lawf
full nor permitted, for to take hir, or to do
hir any hurt, but neuertheles it was per-
mitted to take y young ones if y female
wer not ther. But for to returne to y pr-
uilege of wome, Hipocrates in his booke
that he hath made, hath left in writing,
that even as women grow faster then
men, also by the like means they become
sooner discret, sober and wise, and this is
turned to a pruilege by the lawmakers,
the which declare the women to bee of
sufficient yeares being come to nine-
teene, and the men at twentie. And vnto
women it is permitted and lawefull to
make

Deut. 22.

The priuilege of
women in
that they be
declared
of suffi-

cient yeares
before men.

The praise, and

make testamenteſ and wills at ſwelue
yeareſ of age, and men, not vntill they
come to fourteene yeareſ. But in ſome
countryeſ, they are ſooner declared of
yeareſ ſufficient, then by the lawes of the
auençient lawgiuers. For the Wardiſhip of
yfeminine kinde endeth at herteene yeareſ
of age. But foſ men it endeth not vntill
they come to twentie yeareſ, as though
the climate cauſeth them to bee moze
wife and sober in that age, then in other

**The priu- Provinces and Countryeſ . Likewise
ledge of the it is to be meruayled of the priuiledge of
women of the women of the country of Campania,
Campania. of which the cuſtome of the province is
ſuch, that a noble woman if ſhe mary a
man rusticall and base borne: yet ſhe doth
ennoble him and make him a gentleman.
And by this I call to remembraunce a
ceraine history recited by Plutarch in his
booke that he hath made of worthy wo-**

**The excel- men, where he ſayth, that in times past,
lencie of the the women of Gaulle Celticke, were in
women of such great reputacion for their vertue, that
Gaulle Celts in by the accorde and agreement made be-
times past as Plutarch twaene Hanibal and the Celtrians, it was
doth record concluded, that if any one of the Celts or
Gaulls**

Gauls did complaine of a Carthaginian,
that þ Maistrates of the Carthaginians
shoulde be Judge. But to the contrary,
if that a Carthaginian were wronged or
molested by any of the Celtrians, that the
the judgement and correction should bee
according to the determination & judge-
ment of the women of Gaulle Ceticke,
so greatly were they had in reputation
and renoume for their vertue. And to
the ende that this seeme not straunge,
that women in times past haue iudged
men, not onely amongst the heathen hath
this authoritie bene : but also among the
people of God they haue had this pre-
minence of iudging, as Debora the pro-
phetesse, that iudged the people of Israel, &
did defēd the against þ power of the king
of þ Cananites named Iabin þ had afflic-
ted þ children of Israel þ space of twentie
years, vntil the time that Iabel, that godly iudges the
& vertuous woman & no lesse couragious
then Panthasilla, with a bold heart, killed
Siserra, Captaine of þ host of the Cana-
nites in striking a naile of þ tent through þ
temples of his head. For þ which victory,
Debora did sing a song of thanksgiving vnto
God.

These

The praise, and

These shinges considered, those that are detractorz of semenine kunde, may haue god occasion to holde their peace, and to speake euill of them no more, seeing that they are nothing inferioz to men. Amen.

The troglodites dare
not offend
nor dis-
please their
wives.

Bohem in
his last lec-
ture.

gesell the Troglodites a people of Aethiopia, the most barbarous and farthest from civilitie of all the inhabitantes of the earth, there women haue this authority ouer them, to appoynte and set the men forth a warfare, as they shall thincke good, and the men dare not offend nor gaynesay them by no meanes. For they take it for a great crime and offence, to anger or displease them by any manner of meanes.

¶ Of the excellency of women, and of their ingenious inuentiones. Cap. 3.

Sixe things
since they
were inu-
eted were
neuer left.

Marcus Varo sayth, that in the beginning there were sixe shinges, the which after y they were inuented, they were so esteemed of men, that they would never since suffer them to be lost. The first of them, was to liue altogether in Lewnes,

Townes, Cities, Borroughes, Villages,
and common weales. The seconde was,
the inuencion of letters, the thirde, the
lawes, the fourth the Barbers, the which
Publius Tirinius brought first from Si-
cily to Rome, wher they liued soure hun-
dred fiftie soure yeares, without cutting
off their haire or shaning. The fift, the in-
uentio of Dials, of þ which Aneximines
was the inventor. And I suppose there is
no man be he never so dul in iudgement,
but will say and knoweth well enough,
that the inventing of letters is the most
chiefest of al others þ euer were inuen-
ted in the world, for without the benefite
of them our lyfe should be as no lyfe, but
rather a death and a very graue. There-
fore it is the best and most excellent in-
uencion of all the rest that ever was. for
by the onely use of them the eternetie
of the memoþy is everlasting. So that
if praises ought to bee given, and the me-
moriall to bee extolled, of those that haue
inuened divers & sundry things, as well
for the ornament and content of þ minde,
as also for the vsage & exercise of þ body.
Much moþe, and by greater reason this

C. honour

The praise, and

honour is due to those þ are þ inventors of letters. For the most greatest & chiefeſt inuenſion of all others, is out of doubt þ letters, which are conſeruers of all other inuenſions, & without the benefit thereoff no inuenſion can be kept. They make those things þ were a thouſand yeares paſt, as though they wer preſet. They giue knowleſe to men now liuing of þ which others in times paſt diſ & knew. And þ which me now liuing finde out & inuen, is by letters conſerued & kept to them þ are to come.

Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Theophras-
tus, & all the reſt of the Philosophers of
times paſt, ſhoulde not have bene in ſuch
reputation and estimation as we do take
them, without the onely benefit of þ inuenſion
of letters. And for to be ſhort, all
our humaine life, ſhoulde be a maniſt
death, without the knowledge of them.

But who hath bene the inuenſor of ſo
great a benefit for mankind, hath it bene
the Philosophers and the wiſe men in
times paſt: no truely. For certainly this
did ſeme to paſſe the capacitie of mans
minde. And if we may put any confidence
in Aristotle, he ſaith, that ſuch persons as

are

are composed & made of flesh more soft & delicate then the others, they are of better wit & vnderstanding then the rest. Now there is none but knoweth, that the flesh & skin of a Womā, is more softer, whiter & tender, then the mans. By the meanes wheroff hath ben wel known the great knowledge of their minde, in al subtill inuentionis to haue out passed men, as may be seene by many faire and curios wozkes so to excel, that it passeth the industry of man. And likewise of letters & sciences, soz to manifest and shew, that even as by them men be borne, even so procedeth frō them humaine sciences. Wheroff the noble and famous Carmenta was y inuentrice, whō some name Nicostratia, Mother to Euander of Arcadia. Although y Plinic by the authoztie of Epiganes, doth enforce to proue y they were & haue bene eternall, although he would say they began & had their originall with the worlde. Neuertheles al authozs by comon cōsent, do atfristute y inuention of y Latin letters, to y soresaid Carmenta or Nicostratia. Which inuentionis truely aboue al y rest is wonderfull & to be meruailed at, in the which did

VVomen
inuentors
of
letters.

The praise, and

appeare the deepe knowledge of hir minde
soz to comprehend in a few letters all the
sounds of the voice which seemeth infi-
nite. In times past the learned Leontia
did confute and ouercame with reasons
the famous Theophrastes, as also that
worthy Eustochium did saint Hierome :
who was not ashamed to confess that he
was overcome by hir in that he could not
resolute nor aunswere the questions that
she had propounded.

And not onely women haue inuentioned
the thinges that decke and beautifie the
minde, but also those that serue for the
entertainment and nourishing of the bo-
dy. Soz as in times past men were not al-
together brought from their sauage and
brutish life, but rather hauing more beast-
like nature then humanitie. They lived
with ackozns and rotes, vntill the noble
and worthy woman Ceres found meanes
to sowe wheate, & shewed the way how
to make bread in Attica, Italy, and in Si-
cily, soz the which cause shée was reputed
and iudged a Goddesse.

But she profited the worlde a great
deale moze by the inuention of lawes
that

Learned
men by lear-
ning, haue
bene put to
silence by
vvomen.

Ceres the
first that
found out
the vvay
to make
bread of
vvheate.

that shē founde out , the which are no
lesse wondersfull then the letters, but ra-
ther more necessary & profitable to men,
(without the which) neither houses nor
cities, cōmon weales nor communalties,
no nor the world it selfe,cannot stand nor
continue . And yet notwithstanding,they
are the inventiō of the woman. For this
Ceres first of all gave lawes vnto men,if
we will beleue & give credit to Diodore,
that doth affirme it in his. 6. and Quid in
the. 5. of his transforrations , or Meto-
morphosis.

The same
Ceres the
inuentrice
of lawes.

And in lyke manner Herodotus , the
father of Histories, in his. 6. And there-
fore by Virgil in his Aeneidos,she is cal-
led the lawgiver,the which also is affir-
med by Plinic,in the. 7 . of his naturall
history.

And not onely women haue had a care
and study to invent things that serue for
to furnish the minde, but also they haue
bene carefull to enstruct and teach things
that serue for the profite of the body.
For Isis was the first occasion of tyl-
ledge and plowing of the earth.

In times past , men were so farre
C.iii. from

The praise, and

from knowledge, that they were clothed with nothing but beastes skinnes, vntill that women through their subtill inuention founde out the meanes to spinne and carde Woll. In whiche Arte the good and vertuous Tanaquil was very famous and excellent, who for the selse same cause was named the Goddess of good huswives. But the first that founde out the way to spinne and carde, was a woman of Lidia named Arachne, and hir sonne Closcher, the first inuentor of wheeles and spindells for to spinne Woll, as witnesseth, Plinie and Ouid in his Metamorphosis. And at what staye would the lyfe of man haue bene, if Pallas had not inuented and founde out the way and manner to spinne, twist, and make linnen: For without the vse thereof mans life shoulde haue bene more soule, vncleane, and filthy, then bruite beastes. And truely without the vse of Linnen we shoulde bee more unpure and vncleane then euer was Augea stable, as the common prouerbe sayth.

Tanaquill
or Caia, the
Goddesse of
good hus-
wives.

Plini.ii.7
Ouid.ii.6

The manner
howv to
make linne,
inuented by
Pallas.

If therefore we will by little and
little seeke out the rare excellencyes
that are in women, we would the more
esteme of them and giue them pray-
ses for their excellent gystes. For often-
times it happeneth that we giue
no regarde of thinges proceedinge by
nature: for fault that we doe not di-
ligentlye and carefullye knowe and seeke
out the excellencies and worthynesse of
the same, as we see by these women,
The which because they are commonly
amongest vs, they are the lesse praysed
and esteemed of each one. But when that
more exactly we come to the considera-
tion of the singuler gifts of their mindes,
we doe finde that the celestiall and hea-
uenly graces haue bene more haboun-
dantelye and more excellentlye bestowed
vpon them then vpon men. For what
is the man, that ever was the inuen-
tor of a better or more famous a thinge
then letters, for the ornament of the
spirite, with lawes and artes, and also to
sow wheate, to card wollen, & spin lin-
nen for the preseruation of mens bodies,
and all these as you may see and perceiue

C.iii.

are

If we vvel consider the
excellencie
of women.
we vwould
praise them
greatly.

The praise, and
are feminine i[n]uention[s].

Who would not wonder at the ingeni-
ous and subtill invention that was made
by Semeramis Duene of Caria, for to
mock the unsatiable couetousnes of men.
who caused to be made a faire & gorgious
tomb with this inscription. What king
so euer hath neede of golde or siluer, let
him open this monument and hee shall
 finde to his desire . It came to passe a
longe time after, that king Darius, con-
templating and beholding the excellencie
and beautie of so fayre a Tombe and
monument, at the last founde out this
inscription, which after hee had wel per-
used and read, hee did beleue the same to
be true, and therefore hee made it to be
opened, but within he found written and
graued vpon the stone, these wordes fol-
lowinge . If thou were not a wicked
and a couetous man, thou wouldest ne-
uer remoue nor open the m[on]umentes
nor memoriez of the deade, to seeke ri-
ches.

Eusebius in his Ecclesiasticall histo-
rye , doth repeate a wittie i[n]uention
practised by the Mother of Origen,
for

for to keepe him from receiving Mar-
tirdome with diuers others , he beeing
determined willyngly to offer and pres-
ent himselfe therewerto. But his mother
bearing a natural affection to hir sonne,
& perceiving that she coulde not tourne
his minde nor perswade him from the
same : She had knowledge what dayes
he woulde goe offer himselfe to Sacri-
fice and to receiue Martirdome, the ve-
ry same night she found the meanes to
enter secretly into his chamber, and fin-
ding ther all his apparel and vestments,
she carayed them away with hir . So
that in the morning Origen rising with
deliberation of purpose to go to receiue
Martirdome , was letted by the sleight
and polycie of his mother : for he could
not go, vntille he had gone naked, wher-
off he was ashamed.

There are found an infinite num-
ber of such subtil and wittie sleightes
& inuentions of women, y which for to
declare & set out, would be tedious and
uer long for the Reader, and therefore
I will ende this matter by rehearsing
of an inuention and subtil practise of a

C.v. Woman

The prafe, and

It genty po
tale of a
woman of
our time so
cuse the ho
nestie of a certeine
kinswoman
of hirs
of hirs.

woman in our time, þ which was as cras-
tely brought to passe, as any of these before
spoke. This womā desiring to saue þ ho-
nestie of a certeine þæce or kinswoman
of hirs that was with childe, and never
marayed, perciuing that hir belly began

to swell, she founde the meanes to know
the truthe, which when she had perceiued
to be true, she caused hir kinswoman, to
keepe hir selfe in a chamber secretlye in
hir house with hir, vntill the ende of nine
months.

Now it fortuned at that time that the
womā hir self was also great with childe,
(but it was lawfully by hir husband in
wedlocke) and both had almost one time
to be delyuered, but first it chaunced that
the woman was delyuered, and the time
of hir childebedde beeing past about thre
wakes, it happened that hir neece & kins-
woman began to traualle with childe, but
it was so secret that it was knowne to
none but to hir Aunt and hir selfe. And
being delivred, hir Aunt whiche as I said
was but newly risen from hir childebed,
sayned hir selfe to be in labour and tra-
uayle agayne, and sodeinly before they
could

could get the Midwife and women together (having hir kinswoman's childe, shē made them to thinke and beleue that before their comming she was sodeinly deliuered of that seconde childe. Wheroff all they wondered and meruayled at the straungenesse of the thing.

And I my selfe lykewise did enquire of many skilfull and learned Phisitians, whether this might be naturally: I meane that a woman may trauell and be deliuered of two children, being distance & termed sixteen daies or threē weekes between the birth of the first & seconde. But they affirme and uphold the same to be vnpossible, and yet I did ensure them the facte to be most true, not knowing at that time how it came to passe, but shortly after it was knowne and spred all about, & I was ashamed in y^e I had so stoutly affirmed it to be true, y^e two childre^e wer boorne of one woman , in the manner as I haue before declared, beeing the terme of threē weekes distance between the birth of them both, but in the ende. Time, the father of truth, brought this subtile and poltike intentiōn to light.

Of

The prafe, and

¶ Of two women the which in putting
vpon them mans apparell, did ob-
taine the two greatest estates and so-
vereignetieſ of the world . Cap.4.

T his example is not here ſet down
for to be followed of the feminine
kinde.

But for that it is one of the won-
derfulleſt things and thaunces that euer
happened in the world. That a woman
ſhould atteine to ſuch great knowledge,
that through the profoundneſſe thereoff,
ſhe bath atteined to the triple crowne ,
& was made Pope, beeing in mans ap-
parell and ſo taken. This woman that
we talke off, was boorne in Duchlande,
who in hir youth tooke mannes gar-
mentes vpon hir , and ſo named hir
ſelfe Iohn . And leauing hir countrey ,
the hearing of the fame of the Citiſe of
Athens, trauayled therer. Where at
that time flourished the well ſpring of
all ſciences and learning , and there in
hort time , ſhee profited ſo well in all
kinde of knowledge and ſtudy that from
thence ſhe went to Rome, & there read
openly

openly in the schooles, apparailed lyke a
doctor, & was taken for one of the most
learned men that wer lyuing in those
dayes, and she came to such fauour and
credite, that the Papall seate bēing va-
cant through þ death of Leo the fourth,
about the yeare of our Lord .852.
And she bēing reputed and taken for a
man, was by common consent elected
Pope & made souereigne Prelate, & kept
the seat þ space of two yeares, a month,
and foure dayes. And since hir time the
popes haue vsed to sit in a hollow chaire
for feare to be so abused, but þ thereby,
by felyng they myght know whether
the partie chosen to that dignitie, bē a
man or a womā. And yet Platine giueth
an other reason why they use a hollow
chaire, saying that the same is to the
ende that the Pope bēing lifted vp with
pride, may thereby remember and con-
sider that he is a man, and so know his
owne fraylenesse. Soz if there were no
other reason, but to know whether he
be perfect in his members, that were to
follow the custome of the Priapists and
ancient Idolaters of Aegipt, þ which
receiue

The prayse, and

The amel-
ente Aegip-
tias vvoid
neuer ad-
mit nor suf
fer a gelded
man to bee
a Priest.

receive no priest for to make their sacrific-
es, before þ he be first handeled and con-
secrated to their God Priapus, for to
know whether he be a naturall man, for
they will admit none that be gelded.

The other example is of no lesse admis-
ration, and that is of Theodosia the Em-
presse of Constantinoble, who after that
the Empire was vacant through þ death
of Constantine her husband, and her bro-
ther, Zoe, gave her selfe so to þ affaires, of
the Empire, þ without þ helpe either, of
father, husband, or brother, she gouerned ver-
y honourably the Empire for the space
of two yeares and no more, for she lyued
no longer, beeing bewayled and lamented
of all the people, for that she reigned in
great peace and prosperitie, and gouerned
her subiects peaceably, about the yeare of
our Lord. 1050.

To these may be added the worthy and
famous Empresse Zenobia, who after the
death of the Emperour Odonatus her hus-
band, did most worthely gouerne the Em-
pire of Asia, vntill such time as Aurelian
the Emperour triumphed ouer her.

Of

¶ Of the Amazons and other warlike women, and of tenne women that were taken in mans apparell fighting valiauntly in the dayes of Claudius the second.

Cap.5.

Those that seeketh all the meanes they can to diminish the honour of women, and that take delight and pleasure to abase and extinguish their perfection, chargeing, and burthening them with unconstancie and lightness, they doe not consider that men doe incurre and tangle themselues a great deale more with y-like imperfections, and that women in all kindes of vertue are not onely equall with men, but doe also passe and excell them, for althoough that menne thinke to haue this aduaantage ouer women to be more apt and fit for the warre then they, yea and moze puissant and stronger: Yet nevertherthelesse, they that will giue credite to auncient Histories, they shall finde that they bee in no poynct inferiour vnto men in balyantnesse.

Therefore for this same purpose,
let

The prayse, and

let them read Amian, Marcellin, Troge Pompey, Iustin, Oroseus, Diodore the Sicilian, Plinic, Herodotus, Quintus Curtius, Solon, and Pomponius Mela, in their histories and memoriall actes that they haue set forth of the Amazons, and they shal finde how valyauntly they haue behaued themselues in their time, yea, so couragiously, that they haue left behinde them the glory and fame thereoff, vniuersally in the wold.

These Amazons haue had their abiding in Scithia Assiatica, which Province is to y North part of Asia, (which at this daye is called Tartaria) whose vertues and noble prowesse haue bene in such reputation and fame, that Euristes king of Athens was constrainyd to scke to Hercules, and to moue him to take armes agaynst the Amazons. The whiche Hercules desirous of honour havinge in his compayne Theseus, and other of his friends, went by Sea, for to make warre agaynst Orithia and Antiopa Queenes ouer the sayd Amazons, the which a lyttle before to reuenge themselves on Euristes, and of the

Hercules &
Theseus
went to
fight vwith
the Ama-
zons

The Greekes, they passed into Europ, and
being come to the borders and limits of
Athens, they did wonderful harmes and
made great spoyle. And long time after
that, þ Greeks passing into Asia, soz to cō-
quer the noble citie of Troy, Panthasilla
Quene of þ said Amazons remembraunce
the damage & wrong that hir auncestors
had susteined of the Greekes, shēe came
with a myghtie power to ayde the Troy-
ans, where they did worthy seates of
armes worthy of remebrance, although
that Panthasilla lost hir lyfe by þ hands
of Achilles, by the meanes wheroff the
rest that were left alive, retourned into
their countrey and auncient possessions,
whereas they liued vntill the time that
Alexander the great made warre against
the Hircans. At which time Thelastris
Quene of the said Amazons came to se
Alexander, and there made offer of hir
body to his person and of all that was in
hir power.

Panthasilla
came to sue-
cour the
Troyans

¶ And there shēe vsed such great fami-
liarite and friendship together, that shēe
continued with him thirtene dayes, both
in open & in secret conuersation w̄ him,

D. then

The praise, and
then taking hir leaue of him, shē returnē
ned into hir Country.

The decaye
of the Ama-
sons. But as it is the propertie of time to
consume all thinges : euē so the pow-
er of the Amazons came to decay, so that
by succession of tyme their Kingedome
was utterlye wasted and came to ru-
ine.

This Histoyre of the Amazons,
bringeth to my remembraunce an o-
ther that is founde in the lyfe of the
Emperour Claudius the seconde, who
tryumphed ouer the Gothes.

But in a certeyne battayle that hē
hadde agaynst them , there were ta-
ken tenne Souldyers fightinge verye
valyauntlye , the whiche when they
were unarmed were founde to bē wo-
men, by reason whercoſſ ſome took
opinion that they came of the lyg-
nage of the Amazons , and as An-
drewe Theuet dothe witnesſe in his
descriptyon of the Welle Indies,
there is in the ſayde Countreye an
Ilande inhabyted with woemen, the
whiche they keepe and defende moſte
valy-

balyauntlye , and theire shieldes are
the shelles of Toxterells, throughe the
whiche the shotte of a handegunne will
scant enter.

And not onelye these warlyke Amazons haue bene counted balyaunt
and famous : But also many others,
that in nothiuge haue bene inferysure
to them, as Lactantius dothe recorde,
howe that vpon a tyme the Lacede-
monians dyd laye siege vnto the Cittie
of Messennia : But they of the Cytie
thynckinge to vse pollicye agaynst their
enemyes , vpon a tyme they gotte
pynelye oute and ranne before the
Cytie of Lacedemonia , thynckinge to
supprese it with theire sodeyne inva-
sion.

But the women of Lacedemonia per-
cevinge theire intent , came sodeyne-
ly out against theyz enemyes and putte
them to flight.

The vvor-
thines of
vwomen of
Sparta,

In memory whereoff, there was erec-
ted and made an Image of Venus, all
armed, for an immortall fame and me-
mory of this victorie.

The praise, and

The stoute
courage of
the vwomen
of Cimbria.

The renowne of the women of Cimbria is worthy of no lesse praise then those of Lacennes, for after that the Romaine Consulls, Marius & Catullus, had obtained victory ouer the Cimbrians, and had killed of them in one battell, a hundred and forty thousand, yet for all that they had as much to do to ouercome the women, the which had so fortifyed themselves amongst the stiffe and cariage, as if they had bene within stronge Bulwarkes and Castles, for to defende their chastitie and honour, and there they fought with stoute & manlike courages, with such an obstinacie, that when they perceived that they could no longer resist the force & strength of the Romaines, they sent an embassade to Marius, (that was created Consul by the Romaines, against the Cimbrians) for their libertie, which when they saue y Marius would not by no meanes graunt, beeing destitute and out of all hope to finde favour, they killed one an other, in a wonderfull surge and desperate rage, to the ende that they woulde not fall into the handes of cruell Marius. And in this dispayre some

some of them hanged themselues on the
next trees , and some vpon the coppes
and endes of the Cartes , yea , with
their owne haire, in stede of ropes , as
monge the which there was one wo-
man founde hanging on a tree, havinge
at each foot a child hanging, courting ra-
ther to destroy & fordo themselues, then
to fall into the vnmercifull handes of
their enimies,to lose their name and cha-
stetie. And this ouerthrow and destruc-
tion of the Cimbrians happened in the
yeare before the incarnation of Christ
ninetye four.

The vvon-
derfull de-
strukcion
of the said vvo
men of Cim-
bria.

This disastree and cruell fact of the
Cimbrians notwithstandinge hath no-
thing at al diminished the stoute and va-
liaunt actes of diuerse famous women,
that hath liued since that time. For wee
reade of Zenobia the Queene of Pal-
merians, howe shēe gane a stronge bat-
taile vnto the Emperour Aurelian,caus-
inge him and his host at the first to
flye, but he making no great accompt of
hir, but as an other woman,did write a
letter vnto hir, to laye a side hir wea-
pon and to come & submit hir selfe v-

D.ijj. to

The praise, and

to him. But after that shē had receiued his letter, shē sent him an answer where theroff, in this order following.

Anansver
come from a noble mind that Zeno-
bia made to Aurelian the Empe-
tour.
I never knewe man aske and de-
maunde a thing so vndeasonable as thou
doest, for that is to be obteyned and got-
ten through vertue and worshynes, the
which thou doest require by thy letter.
Thou deest commaund me to submitt
and render my selfe unto thee? Thou art
not ignoraunt I am sure howē that the
Queene Cleopatra dyd chuse rather to
dye then to liue in dishonour, even so, I
lette thee to vnderstande, that I hepe
to want no helpe, no more then I want
courage to beate downe thy pride.

**The stoute
and noble
hearts of
vvomen of
Thracia.**
Moreover it is much to bee meruailed at, of the women of the Countrey
of Thracia in Europe. The whiche in
times past, woulde endure and abyde
to be ceared and marked in the fore-
heads with a whotte burning yron, in
token and witnesse of their gentilytys
and noblenesse of byrth, and those that
were unnable and of base byrth, hadde
not the priuiledge to haue thys marked.

By

By this then that we haue recited, maye manyfeste ly appeare that noblenesse and stoute couraige doth not want nor fayle in women no more then in men, and also they are so active in feates of armes, that the Georgians of Tataria, make of their wiues balyaunt and worthy Houldyngers. And Aeneas Sylvius that afterwarde was Pope Pius in the history of Bohemia, doth make mention that the women of that Countrey haue the rule and souereigntie.

But for that so many historyes as well sacred as prophane, are all full of the noble prowesse and balyaunt actes of women and of the feates of

armes that they haue done, I

will stand no longer

vpon the same,

but procede to

describe

and set out their other

perfections and

vertues.

The praise, and

¶ Of women through whose
meanes countryes and common
weales haue bene purged and
cleansed of such Tyrantes as did
infect & molest them. Cap. 6.

There is nothing in this woorlde that
hath more elevated the fame and re-
nomyne of worthy personnes nor hath
made it more perdurable then the ouer-
thowle and killinge of Tyranttes, for
that they haue continuallye, bene hated
and despised of good men, as in times
past such countryes and common weales
that haue bene vered and waeryed with
Tyranttes, haue in the recompence
and rewarde of those that haue erped
led and destroyed them, erected and
made Pictures and Images of their bo-
dies, and haue had them so farre in ho-
noure and reputation that they haue
called them the sonnes and friends of
God, and some people haue better esteem-
med the killinge of a Tyrant, then the
conquest and winning of a whole Pro-
vince or Countrey, for their common
weale.

Pow

Now then seeing that many men
haue made the glory of their name as it
were immortall, and haue as it were al-
so made themselues a way to eternall
blisse, in purging their countrey from
the oppression of tyrants . In lyke man-
ner there is also founde a great number
of vertuous and famous women þ haue
atteyned and gotten immortall prayse for
killing of tyrants in their nations and
countryes, among þ which the valiant & Judith.
worthy woman Judith may take the first The decree
place & degree of honour. For Nabuchodonosor of Nabucodonosor.
(whose pride was exalted to he-
uen) gaue commaundement by Holophernes
general Captaine of his host,
that all the world shold be obedient vnto him . The which his commaunde-
ment bæing once known and published,
many Kings and Princes did submitte
themselues, and gaue to Holophernes,
homage , honour, and reverence , who
put his whole power & strength to cause
the Jewes also the people of God, to do
the like, and to submit themselfies vnder
his yoake and obedience : And because
that they did resist his power, he did

D.b. afflit

The praise, and

afflict & oppresse them with cruell wars,
the which they could no longer endure,
and that knowing the good and vertuous
woman Iudith, she went into hir
chamber and putting on sackecloth,
she made hir prayres, humbling hir
selfe vnto G D D, to prouoke him to
mercy, and after that, astiring hir selfe
with most pretious Jewells, and also
in gorgeous apparayle, she boldly went
out of Bethulia toward the campe of Ho-
lophernes, whers bēing stayed and
taken by his men of warre, shee was
brought to his presence: who beholding
hir, found hir so beautifull, and so en-
dued with all perfections, wherewith
Nature may furnish and beautifie a per-
son, soz to make hir perfect in al things,
that bēing ouercome with hir beautie,
she found such fauour in his sight, that
she might go and come at al houres, day
and night throught his campe, with hir
handmaide & not one to molest hir. And
thus being beyond al measure passioned
with hir loue, he commaunded Vago
his Chamberlayne to declare vnto hir
his desire, and she made aunswere that

She

She wold in all things fulfull his Lords request.

At which wordes Holophernes was so glad and merry, that he dranke more freely that night then he was accustomed to doe.

And the time beeing come for to take their rest, Vago did shutte Iudith in the chamber of Holophernes, who being drunken with wins, fell in sleepe so soone as he was layde.

By the meanes whereoff, Iudith finding opportunitie to bee revenged of the enemy of GODS people, tooke ^{courage of} Iudeth that holde of his sword hanging by his beds side, and beeing strengthened by the helpe of God, shée smote off his heade, and ^{great captain hofer ncs, enemy to gods people.} gave it to hir handmayde to keape. And after this manner she triumphed ouer Holophernes, enemye unto GODS people, who was of the whole world so much feared, honored, and redoubted, that he was thought to be invincible, but yet nevertheles he was ouercome by the iudent and sober wit of the godly and vertuous woman Iudith.

The valyant Iahel, wise to Haber, is also

The praise, and

The great
& bold en-
terprise of
Iahel that
killed Sisera
Judg. 4

also worthy of immortal prayse, for that with a stout heart she killed Sisera the Captaine of the Cananites, that with Iabin their king did soze afflict the people of the Iewes, but Sisera having lost the battayle, fledde, and was fayne to hide himselfe in Iahels tent, where falling a sleepe, she tooke a nayle of the tent, and with a hammer boldly draue it into the temples of his head, and so he died by the hands of a woman.

In lyke manner that woman that killed that cruell Tyrant Abimilech, sonne to Jerobaal, doth merite great and laudable prayse, who killed all his brethren euē lxx. and destroyed the cittie of Sichem and made it wast, and sowed salt therein, and also burned the Tower and a thousand people therein, of whom no man could haue right. Yet notwithstanding, after that he had besieged and taken Thebes and was come to the Tower to fight agaynst it, and beeing neare unto the gate thereof, a certeine woman within the Tower cast a peice of a Millstone vpon his head and all to brake his brayne panne. But when he felte himselfe

Abimilech
that tyrant
was slaine
by a vvo-
man.
Judg. 9

selfe thus shal mesly wounded to death
by a woman, soz that he would couer his
dishonour to be thus slayn by a woman,
he called hastely to a young man y bare
his harnessse, and sayd vnto him: Draw
thy sworde and slay me, that men boast
not hereafter and say, that a woman slew
him.

The lyke chaunce happened to king
Pyrrhus, who besieging the citie of Ars-
giue, and b̄eing neare vnto the walls,
sodeinly a woman did cast downe a tile
stone vppon his head, wherewithall bee-
ing hurt, and through the great effusion
of bloud that fell from the wound, hee
was so blynded, that he was slayne of a
souldier named Zopyrus.

Pyrrhus
sore vvoū
ded by a
woman.

Aretaphilla, is wonderfully commen-
ded and praysed because that through
great perill and daunger of hir body, she
delyuered hir countrey from the tyranny
of Nicostratus and Leander, the which
persons through hir wisdome and coun-
sell were put to death, and caused Calis-
tra to be burnt, y was y cause of their ty-
ranny. As it is more at large declared by
Plutarch in his booke of worthy women.

Nicostra-
tus & Leā-
der put to
death by y
politicke
counsell of
Aretaphilla
for their
tyranny.

When

The praise, and

When that great and mightie Emperour Cyrus was faldn from his wonted clemencie and gentlenesse, and become cruell and tyrannous, he was taken in warre by Thomiris Queene of the Scithians, who caused his head to be cut off, & in remembrance of his crueltie she made it to be cast into a vessell of full bloud, saying these words. Now Cyrus drinke thy fill of that thou couldst never be satisfied.

Cyrus slain
by Thome
ris queene
of Scithia.

Therefore we must nedes confess and say that women haue bene famous and valyant, in that they haue purged kyngdomes, cities and countreyes, & ryden them from the oppression of Tyrants, wherein all the industry and power of men could not set order nor finde remedie without the meanes of these nobles and couragious women.

¶ Of Ieane the Mayde of Fraunce,
through whose means the French
king recovered part of his Realm
agayne that the Englishmen had
wonne.

Cap. 7.

Although

Although y the historie of this mayde
be as it were common in the eares
of a greate many, bicause it is mentio-
ned in our Chzonicles, yet is it not so rife
vnto vs, as it is to the French nation,
who make their boast of this mayde
as one sent to them by divine inspira-
tion, to their helpe and succour. But
such as they were I shall partely declare
vnto you, as I finde in the French Chzo-
nicle.

This Ieane, whether it were by divine
inspiration or by sorcerie I cannot tell,
but most boldly and stoutly she came
vnto King Charles the seventh, called
Charles the Dolphin, whom that noble &
famous king of England Henry the fift
had chased out of his kingdome, leuing
him a verie little parte of the Realme of
Fraunce to fly vnto for his refuge, but af-
ter his death thorow y dissention that fel
amongst the nobilitye of England by lit-
tle and little this Charles recovered a-
gaine his realme and dominion. Unto
him as I saide came this Ieane, and
promyzed vnto him many straunge
and wonderfull thinges: that is,
that

The praise, and

that she would helpe him to recover the
Reialme, that she would rayse the siege
of Orlcaunce, that was besieged by the
Englishmen, that shee woulde helpe
the Kinge to his crowne, and that
She would know the King among all
his Lords although he did disguyle him-
selfe. Further she sayd, that she shold
haue to helpe hir selfe withall a sword, y
long time before was leste at Fierboyes
which is in the countrey of Touraine in
Saint Katherins Church.

Moreover that the towne of Troyes
in Campania shoulde bee rendered vnto
him within thre dayes, & that the King
should recover all his Reialme agayne
and keepe it in peaceable possession.

And also she revealed and opened vnto him, many other things the which
afterward came to passe, as she had soore
shewed.

And in dede the French Nation is
much bounde to extoll and prayse hir, for
they will saye vnto this daye, that the
Reialme of Fraunce had bene all English
Without the miraculous force and policie
of this Mayde, through whose ayde the
Dolphin

Dolphin Charles that at that time was king but of a fewe Townes and Booughs, did at y last cōquer al his whole Realme againe, except Callis & the frontires thereoff, that was maintained and kept by vs the space of almost thre hundreth yeares, vntill the raigne of Henry de Vallois king of Fraunce the seconde of that name, who through pollicy obtayned y same, when this our Realme of England was oppressed with Spaniardes in the dayes of Queene Mary. And truly it is to be meruailed that god through the meanes of this mayden suffered the Realme of Fraunce to fall into the rule & domination of the French king againe and to diminishe the strength of the Englishmen dayly more and more.

But all things are subiect to alteration & chaunge: even so it chaunced unto this maide, in whome the French men reposed their whole trust. For as the Englishmen were besieginge the towne of Compeignia, the maide Iane came to succour & helpe the besiged with a great number of Frenchmen. But she was taken and hir power ouerthowne, and af-

The praise, and

for that she was sent to Roan, where by reason that she was taken and suspected to bee a Sorcerer vsing witchcraft, shē was condemned to be burnt, and so shē was put to death. And therefore it was thought and iudged that Charles the French king erred in fayth, and therefore not worthy to beare the name of a king but to be put from his kingdome, because that he put his trutl in this mayde and vsed hir couſel, who was afterward proued to be a Sorcerer, vsing Magicke.

For it is the duetie of all kinges , to expell, cut off, and rote out all southsayers, charmers, cunivurers, Witches , Sorcerers, and all such as vse any invocatiōns or familiaritie with the Dīnel, contrary to Gods lawe, as we may read in þ holy Scripture. Againe, there bee some that iudge this maide a holy woman & a Saint, sent by God, to recover againe the kingdome of Fraunce , that was altogether lost and out of all hope to become againe French . For saye they, if shē had not bene sent of G D D, the Englishmen after hir death woulde haue conquered agayne that whiche they

they had lost. But these men doe not consider the state of the realme of Englande. Now that after the death of our noble king Henry the fift, the whole estate and gouernement of the Realme of Fraunce was committed to the noble Duke of Bedford, who in daede all his lyfe time did gouerne the same very valyantly to his perpetuall praise, rather augementinge the same to the Crowne of Englande, then diminishing, as in Halls Chronicle at large doth appere. But after the death of this worthy Duke, and the valyaunt Earle of Salisbury who was slayne before Orleance, & also of other famous noble men of England, ther fel such contention & strife in England among the nobility, and all through the pride of the Cardinall that then was, that þ prouision of the realme of Fraunce was left vnprouided, and the regent wþ other noble men of England þ then were in Fraunce, were faine to repaire home to help to ende controuersies & dissentions begun there, through which negligēce & want of foresight, the Dolphin Charles had a great gap left opē to bring

The cause
of the losse
of Fraunce.

C.ii. his

The praise, and

his purpose to effect, and to reconquerre againe that which his predecessor Philip and he had lost. And thus thorongh ciuill dissentions in England one trouble falling vpon an others necke was the realme of Fraunce lost, which was nobly conquered by king Henry the fift and valiauntly defended and kept duringe the lyfe of the famous duke of Bedford the kings brother. Thus much thought I god to note by the waye by reason of Jeane h̄ damsel of Fraunce , whose bolde and stoute courage in this enterprise is much to be wondred at.

¶ What great benefits are happened
in the world by the meanes of
women. Cap.8.

Tis manifestly knowne vnto all men , vntesse it bee such as are voyde of knowledge, that the greatest benefite that euer happened to the world is the giste of sayth : for by sayth wee knowe G D D and comprehendē his iudgements , and this beeinge holder for a sure and wonderfull truth , wee must

most necessarylye confesse that women haue bene the cause of the greatest benefites that are amongest men . For this greate and souereigns gyfte was first of all announced and declared vnto men by the meanes of women, in that they are the first witnesses of the gloriouse Resurrection of Christ . And they were not onelye the first messengers of this helpe Resurrection , but also it is recorded by certeyne historyes that these vertuous and holye women, Mary Magdalene & Martha , haue preached the Gospell of Christe and converted to the Christian sayth the Countrey of Illeria , whiche nowe is called Sclavonye.

And we read in the olde Chzonicles of Englannde that Glotaira the wife of kinge Egilbert dyd instruct her husband the kinge in the Christian sayth . In such manner that when Augustine dyd come from Rome to preach the Christian fath the people of Englannde were sone conuerted and turned from the error of Pelagius, wherewith the whole realme was infected.

V Vomen
first spre-
ders abrode
of the resur-
rection of
Christ.

Hovv Egil-
bert king of
England re-
ceived the
first fath of
Christian
faith, by the
meanes of
his vwife.

E.ijj. Hermegides

The praise, and
Hermegides king of Goths being insec-
ted with the heresye of Arrius, was con-
uered and drawne from it vnto the
faith of Christ by the meanes of Nige-
gond his wife, as Gawyn doth witnesse
in his second booke.

In like maner Cleotilda the Quene
of Faunce and wife vnto king Clouis,
thorowe hir prayer and gentell inter-
cession, hir husbande did renounce his
Paganisme and became a Christian,
with whome all the subiectes of his
Realme received þ fauþt of Jesus Christ,
and al came by the meanes of the Quene
vnto whom the inhabitanþe of that
kingedome are much bounde.

The like benefite receiued the Gothes
in times past, by the meanes of a wise
and sober Quene named lugulda, who
by hir instant prayers and vertuous de-
monstrations and perswassions vnto the
King hir husbande, he lefte hys
olde errours and became a Christi-
an.

In reading of histories we find many
examples of men that haue done greate
works of vertue, thorow þ meritorious
woþking

workeing of their wifes, as Domitian, Flauius, Cæsar, & others that the curious reader may see in Plutarch & Bocace, the which haue at large described the vertues of illustrious womenne; and the greate benefites that are come to the worlde through their meanes, without whome men shoulde decaye and fayle, and the world should perish and altogether consume, if it were not by them increased and repaired. And in this onely thing are all other benefits comprehended and contained, that may bee imagined or wished, so that Mercury Tri- migest knowing the great perfections and graces of women, hath left in writing, that that man is greatly to be abhorred that hath no wife.

And god himselfe as you may read in Genesis commaunded the Patriarch Abraham that he should hearken and doe all that his god wife Sara did saye unto him.

Gen. xi.

Wherfore we are entred into this matter, touching the great benefits that are hap-

ned in the world by the means of women, let

C. iii. vs

The praise, and

vs which haue received the same be-
nefite (through the lyke meanes) much
more abundantly then euer did any o-
ther Nation that euer was hearde or
knowne since the foundation of the
world , consider the same more exact-
ly.

For what Nation may say that they
haue receiued the worde of God and the
glad tidings of the Gospell so plentifully
and with such continuance of time , as
this Realme of England, and al through
the godly zeale of our blessed and gratis-
ous Queen Elizabeth . What Nation
hath expelled and rooted out Papistrie,
and quite defaced al monuments and oc-
casions of Idolatrie as she hath done.
What Nation hath wounded that great
Beast and Monster of Babilon so sore as
she hath done.

What Nation hath stayed ciuell tu-
mults and suppressed rebellyons , with
lesse bloudshedds then she hath done .
What nation hath auoided the practises,
conspiracies and counsayles of foreyn
Princes & Kings against this Realme,
as she hath done.

Yea

Yea, what Nation hath lyued in such tranquillytie and peace, so long as we vnder her, haue done.

What Prince or Potentate hath ruled with such pitie and clemencie towardes her very enemyes, as she hath done.

What Prince hath had such a care and zeale to Gods worde and to the main-tenaunce thereoff as shew hath had, or what Prince or Potentate hath hadde such a heartie loue and affection toward their subiectes, or moze carefull to mayntaine and keepe them in peace, as she from tyme to tyme, hath hadde and bene.

Therefore to conclude, all the benefites that euer happened in the world through women, is not to be compared to this only benefite of ours (cleane contrary to the desire and expectation of our enemyes.

The which benefite I beseech God long to continue amongst vs.

Amen.

E.v.

Of

The praise, and

¶ Of the most excellent knowledge
of some women the which in learn-
ing & wisedome, haue far excels-
ed diuerse graue & wise Philo-
sophers.

Cap. 9.

Not onely men haue bene wonder-
full curious and desirous throught
their great studie & knowledge in lear-
ning to make their name and fame im-
mortall. But also innumerable women,
haue given themselves to the knowl-
edge and studie of learning, by reading
and meditating booke so profoundlye,
that they haue not onely made them-
selves eqnall to many learned men, but
also in all kinde of knowledge and lear-
ning, they haue excelled the most lear-
ned and famous philosphers that were
lyuing in their times or dayes.

Oſſible And bicause that the Sybels haue
bene most excellent and famous in
knowledge and wisedome of all those of
auncient memory: I will first beginne to
speake

speake of them.

But knowing that Lactantius, Eusebius, Saint Hierome, Horace, and other learned personages haue much better and more learnedly written of them in their woorkes and historyes then I can, therefore I will not stande long to shew many examples vppon the matter.

Now these Sybels were fenne in number, but among them there were two moze famous then the rest, that is to witte, Sybel Cumania, and Sybel Eristriæ.

But here you must note that Sybel is not the name of a woman, but it doth signifie in our language a Diuineresse or Prophetesse.

They were lyuing in the time of the holy ffathers, and beeing instructed and taught in al wisedome and godly knowledge of the Elders, they leste in writing diverse & sundry sentences and sayings, touching the ende of the world, of the Judgement, and of the eternall lyfe.

Furthermore they haue spoken & prophecied

The praise, and

phecied of our Sauour Jesus Christ, also of the estate of wordly things, of kingdomes and countrys and other such like matters, in darke and hidden mysteryes, like to y booke of y Reuelations, vnto which booke of theirs, the auncient Romanes, had alwayes theire recourse in all their affaires and necessities, and dyd conserre vpon them as witnesseth Cicero in the second booke of Diuinatiōn, and he sayde that of the Capitall letters of their verses, were taken out grātie sentences and god words . And their bookes were in such credit and estimation that when any man had sayd, it is the word of Sybel, or Sybel hath spoken it, it was as much as if we shold now say, it is as true as the Gospell.

I read that vpon a time, an oide woman and vnknown came vnto Tarquin the proude, and offered vnto him nines bookes to sel, y which she sayd conteined the Dracles of their Gods, Tarquin de-maunded the price, & she said threē hundreth peices of golde, wherat Tarquin did laugh and mocked her, as though she had doated soz age,

The

The which the olde woman perceiving, cast thre of them into the fire and burned them. And againe asked proude Tarquin if y he woulde buy y other sixe that remayned without demynishing any part of the p[ri]ce, whereat he laugbed againe vmeasurablie , and that perciuing the olde woman , she burned thre more of the saide sixe bookes remaining , and againe asked him if that he woulde buy the other thre that were left , for so much golde as she asked for the nyne. Then Tarquin considering with himself the constancie of y woman, he bought the three bookes that were left, and gaue hir so much golde as the nyne shoulde haue cost him , but after that she was never seene more . And these thre bookes, were kept in a secrete place, and there was fiftene men appointed and chosen, vnto whom the custodie and keepeing of these bookes were committed and givuen.

After these Sybels the Quene of Saba, whom some call Nicaula and others Manqueda, is worthy and doth merits the first place in reputation and know ledge

The prayse, and

The queen
of Saba
most excel-
lent in
knowledg

s.kings.ca 10

Math.ii.

Dama.

Arreca.

Hortensia.

ledge, whose ardant zeale and desire was suchn the obtainig and conquering a Treasure of sapience , that the scripture giueth hir an immortall praise , for that shee came from the confines and viter- most partes of the worlde into the lande of Iudea to heare the wisedome of Solo- mon , with whom she did dispute most profoundly, from the Isop unto the Cea- der, that is to say from the least hearb unto the most highest tree of Lybanon, that in disputing and putting forth questions she might know the property and nature of heabes and trees.

The doctrine of Pythagoras had never beeene knowne , because of the obscuritie thereoif, if that Dama, his daughter had not kept schole after the decease of hir fa- ther and did interpret it.

Arreca did so excell in knowledge that she required no doctour to instructe hir sonne Aristippus , but she hir selfe did teach and instruct him in the doctrine of Philosophie , for the which cause hee was called Matrodidactus, that is to say taught of his mother.Hortencia daugh- ter unto that famous Drator Hortensi- us,

us, was so wonderfull in knowledge, that after she had made an eloquent Oration before the Senatores, hir posteritie had hir in wonderfull admiration, not onely because of hir facunditis and excellencie, but also for that she shold be a spectacle to be immitated and followed.

Corrinna had such excellent knowledge in poesye and making verse, that there in she excelled the famous Poet Pindarus, in the which kinde of verse Theano was as well scene as Corrinna. And Socrates was not ashamed openly to confess that he had learned many good things of the learned Aspasia. Leoncea overcame in disputation and reasons the Philosopher Theophrastus. Platoes Schoole was defended and forbidden to women and maydes: But neuerthelesse, Laschenca and Axiothia leste not to frequent and haunt it in mens apparel.

Cornelia wife unto Scipio Africanus was so excellent in knowledge that she left unto hir posteritie many good and eloquent Epistles, So did Cornelia many verses that she has made.

Caria Afrania, did so well profite in the

Corrinna

Theano

Aspasia.
Leoncea.Laschenca
Axiothia.

Cornelia.

Cornelia.

Caria.

Afrania.

The prayse, and

the ciuill lawe , that forsaking hir d-
state and spindle , she pleaded very lear-
nedly, many causes before the conscript
fathers and Senators . Diodore the Si-
Lib. 6. ca 6cilian had ffeue wonderfull Daughters
both in knowledge and maydenly shame-
fastnesse . But nowe to come to Chri-
stian Women , Eusebius in his Ecclesi-
asticall hystorie sheweth that Mammea,
mother unto the Emperour Alexander
Seuerus, did so much esteeme knowledges
and had it in such price , that vnder-
standing the fame of the renomed ves-
sel of erudition Origen: She sent certain
notable personages of hir court to An-
tioche, where as then he dwelled, whom
she besought with all submision that it
woulde please him to take the paines to
come to hir soz to instruct hir in the
worde of God , and that she had an vn-
speakable desire and an vncredible zeals
to see him and to heare his voyce . Te-
clea was Saint Paules Disciple, full of
knowledge and vnderstanding, & Saint
Katherine a Virgine of Alexandria of
most holy life, did ouercome fiftie Philos-
ophers with hir doctrine and wisedome.

The

The four daughters of Saint Philip
the Apostle, and Ammia, were Proph-
ettes of the new Testament in the Church
of Philadelphia.

Ammia;
Eusebius.13
5. cap.17,

In the dayes of Saint Hierome, the
world did habound with women of great
knowledge and understanding, and also,
with great eloquence, vnto the which he
did write and dedicate many good and
wholsome Epistles, as to Eustochia, Pau-
lia, Gerontia, Fabiola, Furia, Marcellia,
Demetriade, Siluia, and many others.

Eupochia wife vnto the Emperour
Theodosia, was not onely in great repu-
tation and fame bicause of the glorie of
hir empyre, but also she was wonderful
greatly esteemed for the high knowledge
and wisdome aboue all the rest in hir
time: In whose daies, ther wer such store
of wome endued with wisdome & knowl-
ledge, that Origen himselfe that famous
Clarke, had the help of seuen Virgins in the
composition of his bookes, the which Vir-
gins serued to be his secretaries to write
that, which he composed and made con-
tinually, & he himselfe could not furnish
nor accomplish his wo:kes without the

Origen had
seuen vir-
gins to his
secretaries,
to vwrite the
composition
of his
wo:ks.
Buse lib.6
cap.17.

F. ayde

The praise, and

ayde & helpe of these sayd damsels & vir-
gins. Now for all that the world in those
dayes was so well replenished with so
great a number of learned women, that
were very eloquet and wise, we must not
therefore thinke that this our age is left
desolate and veide, for thanked be God,
there is found a number that in no point
shal give place to those of times past. But
if things be wayed in an equal ballance,
it will be found, that they haue not onely
bene equall, but also by long distaunce &
continuance they haue excelled, þ which
presyding to describe any thing, haue not
þ used þ meane of a Secretary, as those in
times past, for to set forth by writing the
subtill inuentions of their mindes. For
þ who can finde in al þ auncient memorie,
any woman were shē never so full of
knowledge, that might be compared, unto
the Lady Margaret Vallois, Quene of
Nauara, and onely sister to Fraunces the
French king, the first of that name: whose
name & fame, shal for euer remaine in the
memory of men, & honored in the mouth
of the wise perpetually, because of the em-
inent knowledge and heroscal vertues,
where-

The Ladie
Margaret
Vallois
queene of
Nauara.

wherewith she was endued & enriched, through the great grace of God, farre above all other Ladys & pryncesses in hir time. Either what Cornelia or Cornelis-
cia, may be compared to þ Lady Helis-
an of Crennes a French gentlewoman, soz
what philosopher could more learnedly
haue set to their hand to their pen þe she
hath done, & as doth appeare by þ godly
woyls þ she hath left vs in great num-
ber. But I will leauie many examples of
diuers other ladys and gentlewomen of
that realme, þ which in knowledge haue
excelled & in humaine sciences, nct onely
womyn but also most men in their daies.

Helisane
of Crennes
a French
gentlewoman.

For to come unto Christian de Pisa, a
gentlewoman of Italy, þ which may take
the first degr  among all the wise wome
that euer I read or heard off. Ther never
was known any, were they never so wel
learned, & by any means might be compa-
red to hir, in þ respect of fair writing, & en-
diting, in þ which she so far excelled, þ she
made many learned personages ashamed
that durst not take pen in hand to couter-
naille hir doings, so far was she endued w
divine graces, aboue al those þ haue take-

Christian
de Pisa an
Italian gen-
tewoman.

The praise, and

in hand to exercise to write faire. And he
þ wil not credit nor beleue my sayinge,
let hym reade his workes and he shall
finds that never person hath sought out
more lyuely the laudes and prayses with
the excellent vertues & qualities of wo-
men, nor one þ hath better answered vnto
the obiects that þ defamers of se-
minine kunde can obiect , then she hath
done,I dare boldly say more learnedly
then any other authoz þ hath written of þ
like matter. But for all this,Duema Lu-
Duema Li-
gria a Spia-
nese Ladie.
gia,a gentlewoman of Spaine,meritetþ not
lesse commendations & praise then Chris-
tianne de Pisa,bicaus of the great & per-
fect knowledge wherewith she was most
richly endued,farre aboue anye other of
that nation. For she being one of the la-
dyes of honnor belonging to the Ladye
Mary,sister unto the king of Portingal,&
of years not aboue twelue. She shewed
before the Pope Paulc, the third of that
name,in þ yeare. 1548.what knowledges
and learning she was indued with . In
writing vnto him most learnedly , in
fine sundry languages:that is to wit, in
Hebrewe,Greece,Latin,Chaldean,& in þ

Arabian

Arabian tongue: So that the Pope for all his learninge was faine to seeke interpreters to declare & expound hir letters. And in the same time flourished at Rome an other Spanish Lady named Isabel Rosera, the which made profession to read & expound the hard and difficulte works in Latin of Lescot, whō the Fryers call the subtil Doctor. And to hir lecture & auditory came many prelates and Cardinals of name, to heare hir.

Isabel Rosera.

The four daughters of Ferdinand, king of Aragon, and of Dame Isabel of Castillia his wife, are no lesse worthy of praise for their wisdom and understandinge, of which daughters, two of them were Quenes of Portingal, an other was maried to Philip Duke of Austria, & the fourth was maried to the worthy and famous Prince, king Henry the eight, named Quene Katherine, and Mother to Quene Mary, all the which four daughters were so well learned þ many times they have ben seene to talk wiþ divers embassadores in þ latin tongue. And amongst these we may put divers ladyes and gentlewomen of this realme

The wisedome and knowledg of the four Daughters of the king of Aragon.

The praise, and

Whose learning & knowledge in þ Greek
& Latin tonges, haue farre excelled these
before named, as þ god & vertuous La-

Lady Iane dy Iane with many others whd I could
name, which for þ I wil not be tedious, I
ouerpasse. But aboue all these before na-
med, let our gracious quene & souereigne

The vvises
dome and
knowvledge
of our
Queene Eli-
zabeth.
lady step into place , whose wonderfull
knowledge & learning doth superabound
and passe all those before named: So that

without any comparison or equalitie, she
is the rare Phoenix that bath bene & is
at this presēt to be sōud. For what prince
Was ever heard off, so wel seene in so ma-
ny sundry languages, as Latin, Greeke,
Hebrew, French, Dutch, Spanish, Italian.
Insomuch þ she is able to question & rea-
son in any of þ sayd, to any foreine en-
bassadoꝝ or other with such modell y, and
so profoundly, that it is wonderfull unto
straungers to heare the same. Therefore
these fewe examples of the great know-
ledge of women shall suffice at this pre-
sent, that we may come to speake of o-
ther their vertues and perfections þ are
of no leſſe p̄ice then the knowledge, but
rather more required and more to bee

prayed

may sed in them.

**¶ Of the chasitie of some women,
a chiefe vertue required in them.**

Cap. I.

Seven as among vices, some are dishonest and others most execrable and abominable, also among vertues, some are more commendable and more worthy of praise then the rest. As chasitie which in a woman is þ most souereign and chieffel Jewell of all other vertues: For although a woman want beatute, knowledge, eloquence, riches, kindred, friends, or any other fauour, wherewith Nature may furnish a woman to make her perfect, yet, if she be chast, all shalld do well with her: but if this vertue fayleþ be wanting, although shē haue all other perfections þ may be attributed vnto her, it is to no effect, but she shalbe as a withered flower, without any estimation or basure, for chasitie being once lost, al other vertues are quenched in her. Hereof speakeþ Xenocrates þ philosopher, saying: chasitie is the proper Element for women,

Chasitie is
the chieffest
virtue in a
woman.

The notable saying
of xenocra-
tes.

The praise, and
even as the water is for fishes, and the
ayre for soules and birdes.

The chaste-
tie of Lu-
cretia.

Also Lucretia sayde, that a woman
can haue no pleasure nor joy in þ world,
hir chastitie being once bytulated and brou-
ken, the whiche wordes shee spake not
in vaine, but ratified and confirmed the
same by the shedding of hir bloud, after
that she had bene most outragiously for-
ced and bytulated by proude Tarquin.

Susanna a
mirrour &
example of
chasterie to
all ladies.
Dan. 13.

But a Christian woman hath not a
better glasse before her eyes nor a better
example of chastitie then of that famous
and chaste Lady Susanna, which had ra-
ther incurre the perill and daunger of
hir lyfe then to yeld or consent unto the
filthy desires and lusts of two lecherous
olde men, being so farre striken in yeares
that every hower death, the earth, and
the very wormes, did as it were adioyne
and summon them to appeare before the
most fearefull and terrible Judgement
seat of God.

Notwithstanding as it were in de-
spight of their yeares, they loased the
bridell, and gaue place to their inconti-
nencie, setting their heartes on fire, and
Without

without all feare of the Judgements of God, they did require hir of loue, and pricked with vnnaturall flames, they soughte to desile hir honour, but all in bayne, for they could not preuayle. And surely in my minde, I wish that all those that give themselves in pray to unlawfull loue, and that are to lyberal of their honour, had in stede of Tablets and Pomanders that hang before them, this picture and looking glasse of chastitie wel printed and engraued in their hearts, to the ende that they might moze constantly and more vertuously resist their foolish and disordinate desires.

Now although y^e the chastitie of this holy Lady, is an example of most auicente memory, yet neverthelesse y^e honest & commendable pudicitie & chastitie of Alice the Countesse of Salisbury, doth merit no lesse praye but rather worthy to bee had in perpetuall memory during all ages.

Who perciuing the King Edward
the of that name, to burne in unlawfull lust towards hir, & that his pretence was to rauish hir honour, pronoking hir,

F.b. Day

The praise, and
day by day to his disordinate desire, and
also that those of his courte (having no
other respect but to please his humeur)
gane him counsell that if she of hir god
will would not consent & yeeld to his re
quest, that he shold take hir and com
pell hir perforce, and so vse his power
and royall authoritie.

After which counsell he sent for the
lady Countesse, thinking to abuse hir ac
cording to his pleasure , and she seeing
hir selfe in most extreme daunger, bee
ing perplexed and destitute of all helpe,
and fearing to be byolated, she fell down
at the kings feete shewing and declaring
vnto him with a pitifull boyce and with
pouring forth plentie of teares, y seyng
that hir vnhappy fortune and harde de
strie had brought hir thether into that
place , before his presence, as the inno
cent Lambe committed to the Sacri
fice , she desired him most humbly to
graunt vnto hir one request that shes
would make.

The countes
of Salisbu
ries request
to the king.

Wherewith the King having right
ioyfull and glad, did sweare vnto hir by
the sacrament of Baptisme, the whiche

he had taken, that shee shoulde not bē
sayde nay in any thing that was in his
power, yea if it were his Crowne and
Scepter she shoulde haue it.

Then the chaste & good Lady, did shew
him a great knyf þ she pulled out wher
she had hidden it vnder her gowne, say-
ing unto him, that the giste that she re-
quested, and for the which he had giuen
and bounde his faith was, that she did
most humbly desire his grace, rather then
to take away her honour, that he would
first take his sworð and so ende her lyfe,
or els to suffer her with that knyf that
she had brought (of purpose) to kill her
selfe, to the ende, that her innocent bloud
might beare witnesse before God of her
vndefiled chastitie.

The King perceiving þ invincible cha-
stitie & constancie of this vertuous lady,
was vanquished and ouercome with a
great remoue of conscience.

And somewhat to requite and re-
ward the wryng and iniurie that he had
offered unto her, in recompence of her ho-
nest chastitie, he did consent to take her
vnto his lawfull wife, & so he made her

Quene

The praise, and

Quene of Englande . By this may be
seen how well god doth recompence the
good wills of those that put themselves in
perill of their lyves rather then they wil
seeme to offend him.

The chasti-
tie of queen
Elizabeth
wifre to
King Ed.
ward the 4.
The lyke also came to passe in the
dapes of King Edward the fourth by the
Lady Elizabeth Gray, beeing a widdow,
and making suye vnto the King for cer-
teine landes which did belong vnto hir
late husband and were wrongfully kept
from hir : The King beeing a Prince
somewhat subject vnto the pleasures of
the world, and carnally bent , did vrge
this good & vertuous Lady to make spoile
of hir chastitie, promising to graunt hir
request, if she would suffer him to haue
his fleshly desire, but as she would in no
wise graunt hir request (for all that he
gane hir many faire wordes and promis-
ed hir mariage if she would graunt it
him : So she at the last made him this
aunsweare,

That as she was farre unmeet to
be the Kings marryed wife by reason of
hir base degréé and parentage : So
lykewise shes thoughts hir selfe to
god

good to be a kings concubyne, and there-
fore she desired his grace to b^rge hir no
more in such matters for his labour was
in vaine. The king perceiving that she
was fully bent to k^epe hir honour vnde-
filed & that he had tryed hir and founde
his labour to be vaine, thought hir more
it to be a princes peere and so tooke hir
to his wife and made hir a Duene, con-
trary to the will of the nobilitie for that
they iudged hir to base being a knighthes
widowe to match in mariage with a
Prince and Potentate thorowe which
was fought a cruell battell by the Earle
of Warwicke, but the victory remayned
to the king, as by the sequell of the story
doth appeare.

Eusebius rehearseth that the tyrant
Maxentius set by those y were ministers
of his fleshly desires, for a certaine Lady
of Rome named Sophronia for to abuse
hir at his owne will and pleasure.

But she declared the whole matter to
hir husband, and he casting forth a great
sigh saide, that he must either suffer and
abide that shame and dishonour, or else
prepare himselfe to receiue death. She se-

Lib. 6. ca. 17
Of his Ec-
clesiastical
historie.

The prayse, and

Sophronia
killed her
self for feare
so be defiled

ing that hir husband for to a bwoyd death
was content to give hir honestie as a
pray unto the tyrant, she did very wisely
dissēble hir grieſe & ſaide vnto þ tyrants
ſeruants that were come to fetch hir.
My maſters I pray you to ſtay a while
vntill that I may haue time to prepare
my ſelſe in my gorgious attyre and best
apparel, to ſhew my ſelſe moze comely
before the p̄ſence of the Emperours
maieſtie, the which they willingly grau-
ted: And ſhe went into hir chamber, and
fell vpon hir knees praying and reque-
ſting God to helpe hir, and minding to
make a ſacrifice of hir life, offering vnto
him the challice of hir heart, ſhe tooke a
knife wherewith ſhe ſtrake hir ſelſe in-
to the ſtomake, and in this manner
ſhe gaue vp the ghoast, with hir chal-
lice vndeſiled. In lyke manner the
ſame Eusebius writing of a certeine per-
ſecution that was made in Alexandria
and Antioche, he ſheweth a hiftorie of
a vertuous Ladie that fel into the hands
of thole that persecuted the Christians.
She perceiuing both hir ſelſe and two
of hir Daughters to be in extreme daū-
ger

her to be rauished and defloured, she desired leaue of her keepers that shée might goe to ease nature, the which they graunted hir, for both naturall shame and reuerence constrainyd them to give hir that respite.

Then the godd Lady perceiving that she was nere vnto a riuier, and hauing sufficiēt occasion to saue hir honestie, she cast hir selfe into the riuier, and hir two daughters after hir, to saue their chalsticke. And lykewise two other virgins veray young of yeares cast themselues into the Sea, for to keepe themselues from being rauished.

And not onely Christian women haue preserued & kept their chalsticke and iusticie with the perill of their lyues, but also there is found an infinite number of heathen women, that had rather lose their lyues then their honestie. Among the which Nicas a Virgin of excellent beautie and of wonderfull fauour, may take the first place, for she chose rather to dye holding & embrasing the knees of her father Philodion, then to consent to the unmeasurable desire of a wicked tyrant, y
would

A matrone
of Rome,
drovvned
hir selfe for
feare to be
violated.

Nicas
Plutarke.

The praise, and

woulde haue rauished hir . And vpon a
time a certaine prince thought to haue ca-
ried away one of the Westall Virgins to

An exam-
ple of a ver-
sal virgin
that put out
hir oþne
eyes.
haue abused hir at his pleasure, bicausē
that she was indued with a singuler
beautie and of a comely grace, but she put
out hir owne eyes, soz that she harde lay
that the disordinate affection of this
prince, came thoroþe the viewe and be-
holding of hir faire eyes and gracious
countenaunce.

Saint Hierom disputing against Iouini-
an, doth rehearse many memoriall exam-
ples of women that haue beeþ famous
thoroþe their owne shamefastnesse and
chastitie , as þ virgyns Lucrines þ from
yeare to yeare were sent in pilgrimage
into the countrie of Troy, the which con-
tinued so by succession þ space of a thou-
sand yeares, without any ill talke of
them or any sinister occasion to suspect
the honour and chastitie of any of them.

Cleobulina In like manner Cleobulina Daughter
vnto one of the seuen wise Maisters, li-
ued so vertuously, that she had in disdaine
al Venus pleasures, and remayned al hir
life long a Virgine.

Aster

After y the thirtie tyzats of Athens had
murthered & spoyled one named Phaedon
in his hal, they made his daughters
being virgins to come forth and daunce
vpon y pavement which was still bloud-
dy with the slaughter of their father, but
they sayning to goe and make water,
did throw themselves headlonge into a
well soz to keepe and preserue their vir-
ginitie, euен vntill death. Fiftie virgins
of Lacedemonia, that the Messenians
thought to haue defloured, hauing them
in their power, did rather chuse to dye
willingly, then to consent to such villan-
ny, for y which afterward, followed great
and cruell warre.

And the Captaine Aristomenes a Mes-
senian, having obtained victory of the La-
cedemonias, carted away twelue virgins
that he had taken at the nocturnall sacri-
fices which were called Hyacinthens,
and as Aristomenes Souldyers were
about to force and to doe wronge to
these virgins, hee wthstode them from
doing such iniurye, and killed some of
them that woulde not forbeare from do-
ing violence to the sayde virgins.

G.

These

The chaff-
rie of the
daughters of
Phaedon.

Fifty vir-
gins of La-
cedemonia.

The praise, and

A recom-
penſe made
to ſaide
Aristome-
nes.

The which virgins beeing afterwarde
redeemed by their parents and fet at ly-
bertye, hauing in remembraunce the great
benefits that Aristomenes had done vnto
thē, they would by no meanes returne
into their Countrey, vntill that vpon
their knēs they had gotten pardon and
forgiuenesse of the Judges, before whom
Aristomenes was afterwarde accused,
and they declared that hee onely had ben
the protector and defendour of their vir-
ginitie.

The lyke Saint Hierome and Oros-
feus rehearseth for a thing to be remem-
bered, that after the ouerthowe of the
Ambroyans & Tygurins, a people of Pio-
uince, their wiues hauinge knowledge
and wozde that the battayle was lost,
and that they shoulde bee deliuered in-
to seruitude and thaldome, and be-
come Concubines vnto the Romaines
that were the conquerours, thē hun-
dred of the moſt nobleſt and of highest
parentage, dyd preſent themſelues be-
fore the conſull Marius, making to him
this requeſt, that if he woulde haue them
alioe, that it may be lawfull for them to
keeps

The requeſt
of three hun-
dred Ma-
triſt to the
conſull Ma-
rius,

keepe their chastitie, and that this might be, that it would please him to assigne them place in the seruice of the vestall virgins, or that they might be sent backe to the Temple of Ceres , the whiche soz that they coulde not obteine nor haue graunted , they killed all their younge children, and the next daye they were all founde dead, and had killed one another.

Seuen Milesian virgins perceiving that the fury of the Gaulls had spoyled & wasted all, and fearing to bee rauished, they loued rather to lose their lives then their virginitie . And a virgin of Thebes, being against hir will defloured by a Macedonian, dyd so for a time dissemble hir griefe, vntill such time as shée found oportunitie to be reuenged, and findinge occasion taking the rauisher of hir virginity on a time a sleepe, she killed hym, and afterwardre killed hir selfe, hauinge no desire to liue anye longer , hir chastitie bēinge once lost, the whiche shē woulde not dwe, vntill that shē hadde taken vengeance of him that hav spoyled hir of hir maydenheade.

G.ii.

Chiometria

Praise

The praise, and

Chiometria wife unto Ortagantes,
being taken in warre was forced by a
Tribune, but certaine tyme after shē
was put to rausome, the whiche was
brought to hir by hir parentes and
frienches, & when she was delyuered, the
Tribune did keepe hir company part of
the way. But as he woulde haue taken
his leaue to departe, shē made a secrete
signe to one of hir seruants to cut off his
heade, that did profer to kisse hir, the
which was executed by him to whome
she made the signe. Then Chiometria
tooke the heade and brought it home to
hir house, and being there she cast it
down at hir husbands feete, for the which
fact hir husbande did reproue hir very
sharply, saying, that faith ought to bee
keept euen to our very enimie: To the
which she aunswere, that it was a
thing most commendable and honest to
keepe faith and promise. But yet much
more honest was this that he alone was
lyuing of all those that had lyen with
hir.

After that þ tyrant Aristotin was put
to death, by the meanes and worthynesse
of

Chiometria
killed him
that h'd as
bused him.
Flurarche
in his booke
of Iustus
women.

of Megisthonnes a most valyaunt & couragious woman. The sayde Tyrantes house was put to the spoyle, and two of his daughters of right excellent beautie

Megisthon
ne a coura-
gious yma-
man.

were taken , the which the Souldiers would haue defiled and spoyled of their virginitie before they should be killed. The which Megisthonne perceiuinge, toke them awaie from out of their handes, declaring vnto them, that if they did such a fact it should be vnto their reproch so ever. By whose perswasion these daughters of this tyraunt Aristotin were permitted to kill themselues vnto their owne handes, beeinge in their owne chouse what death they wold dye. And so the ende they shoulde so dye , they were put both together in a chamber. Then the eldest who neither in word nor countenance shewed any feare of death, take hir girdell, and madg it fast to a balke or beame of wood, for to hang hir selfe, exhorting hir sister with a manly courage to doe the lyke . But the youngest taking hir sister by the hande , did praye hir to suffer hir to dye the first, and the eldest aunswyered my fruyte and wel-

G.iii.

beloued

The praise, and

The pitiful
death of
two sisters

belovied syster, even as betherto we haue
lyued and loued lyke sisters, I haue not
denyed thee in any one thing, even so
now I am ready to yelde and graunt to
thy request at this last hōwer, that is,
that I will out lyue thee, although it
will be vnto me a great grieve to see thee
dye. This talke beynge ended the
youngest syster tooke hir gyrdell, and
fastening it about hir throake therewith
she hanged hir selfe, hir eldest syster af-
ter she was deade tooke hir downe, and
covered hir so well as she coulde possible.
And then turning hir selfe to Megistō-
rie, shee prayed hir that after hir death
she woulde not suffer their bodies to re-
maine naked vppon the earth; but that
they myght be covered and not seene na-
ked, and after these wordes she hanged
hirselle as hirsister had done.

The greate
disastris
of the Melis-
sian virgins

We reade of the Melissian virgins
the which for no meanes nor wayes
could be kept from hanging themselues,
the which some think came by a straunge
disease of a corrupted minde, from the
which doing þ cause could not be known
nor the remedie founde, but that it was

a fantasticall contagion proceeding of the infection of the ayre that moued them thereunto, being as it were beside themselves enduced and ledde thereunto by some wicked spirite, for the which as I saide no remedy coulde be founde by no counsell, untill that by the good advise & counsell of one that founde a meanes to haue a law and statute published, to stripp all those starke naked that so had hanged themselues after their death, and to trayne their naked boordes through the streetes to the open shewe of the people.

Through which polyticke lawe and constitution there came such efficacie that very shame and dishonour that their boordes shoulde bee trayned naked and sane, brought such vertue, that from thenceforth they ceased to hang themselves any more.

Who woulde not meruayle of the pudicitie and shame of Heathen Wrigins, the which contynued and despised deathe, but feare and shamefastnesse, they hadde in most highe reuerence.

G. iiiij. In

The praise, and

In a certaine battaille of Thessalia, the husbands enclosed their wiues & daughters with sagots, straw & drye wood, to the ende that if the men wers overcome in battayle, the wood and straw should be set on fire, & so their wiues and daughters to be consumed and burnt, to the which the women and virgins did willingly consent and agree for the preseruation of their chasttie, and they did greatly commende and prayse those that inuented this devise. Neuerthelesse in the ende their husbands got the victory through the meane s and vertue of so honest and good wiues.

A vvise an
svvere of a
Lacenian
Ladie to an
Amorous
gentleman
that vrged
hir

A Lacenian Ladie, being requested and desired by a young Gentleman, of foolish loue, she aunswere: If you did require of me that which belongeth to me and is mine, I might peraduenture doe you some pleasure, but the ydicitie that I had beeing a mayde was in the power and pleasure of my parents, and now my chasttie doth belong unto my husbande, and is in his power, so that I cannot nor will not give, that which you doe seeke.

In

In reading byssories mention is made, ^{The chaste}
 of Fauna, who was so chaste that never
 man lyuing saue her without her man-^{tie of Fauna}
 tell but onely her husbande Faunus. And
 therefore after her death she was called
 the godd goddess, to whose sacrifices ne-
 ver man assited, neither durst they hane
 any similitudes or Images of any man
 or man childe, for to auoyde all sinister
 thoughts and evill cogitations.

Likewise Claudia may here be set downe for an example of great chastitie, ^{The Chaste}
 who being wrongfully accused of impu-^{tie of Clau-}
^{diz.}
 dicite, & so to testifie & trie her chastitie,
 it came to passe that there was found a-
 mong the Sybels writings, that the
 Romaines shold lende to fiske y mother
 Idaea, the which was put in a shippe, up-
 pon the ryuer of Tyber, but the shippe,
 fiske so fast in the sande that by no
 meanes neare by no strenght it could be re-
 moved nor haled out, ^{of success}
 Then Claudia, being upon her knees, ^{Lactan.lib}
^{2.cap.8.de-}
^{diui,inisti}
^{cute.}
 prayed the goddesse, that if she judged her
 chaste that she would suffer him to drawe
 the shipp with his owne teeth, and by this
 prayer, he a woman, the shipp was re-
 moued,

The praise, and

invited, that all the youth in Rome wished
al their strength had no power to remoue.
But this fable or history written by
Lactantius in the seconde booke of hea-
uenly institutions, bringeth to my re-
membrance an other history written by
Polydore Virgill in his hystorie of the
tates of England. Who saith that king
Edward the seconde caused Emlin his
mother to be put in prison; who falsely
was accused of adulterie by the Earle
of Godwin, who in witness of his char-
acter, and tryall of his innocentie, went
vpon hot burning coales in the presence
of King Edward his nobyltie, saying these
words. Cuer to let the fire burne, & con-
fesse me, as I am culpable of this fact,
Wherof I am accused, & so she passed tho-
rough fire without any hurt or harme.
By the which it was manifestly known
that wrongfully and without cause they
went about to take away hir honour &
good name, the which she had in as great
price and had kept and preserved as his
owne selfe. But I will nowe ende this
matter with one history more, no lesse
aduenturall and straunge then this for-
mer

mer the which is declared by Munsther
in his Cosmographie, and by Crantius
in the Anualls of Almaine, of a vertuous
Princesse named Gunegundia wife A mother
vnto Henry the lame, that was Emper^{myracle}
rour of Rome, who was most falsely ac-
cused by a gentleman of hit court to haue
committed adulterie with a knight, but
in tryall of hit honour and honestie, she
went barefooted vpon sixe hot barres of
yron without hauning any harme or blem^{shewed}
ish, God preseruing hit from daunger,^{negundia}
in token of hit integrarie.<sup>which was
vniustly ac-
cused of a-
dulterie.</sup>

A nother
myracle
vpon Gu-
negundia
which was
vniustly ac-
cused of a-
dulterie.
Crantius in
his chroni-
cles of Al-
mayne.

¶ Of the meruaylous pridencie of some women.

Cap. II

If those that haue a delighght & take
pleasure to speake euill and detract
women so to abase their perfection, did
consider y^e vertues wherwith they be in-
duced and that are no lesse wonderfull in
them then in men, I suppose they would
chaunge their opinion, and would do as
that Poet who in his bourses blaming
Helena the faire, did afterwards con-
uerte his stile to hit y^e praise, and
greatly

The praise, and
greatly exalted hir in his writhings, cal-
ling backe & gaynesaying that which he
had done before, & so as it were made hir
an honourable amendes. Also I thinke y
if y detractor & slaunderers of feminine
kinde would more earnestly consider y er-
rancies of women, they would convert
their detracting & slaundering, to y praise
& commendation of y kinde. Now among y
vertues wherwith they be alwaies indu-
ed, prudencie is as it were vnto them a
thing naturall, as it appeareth almost
by all examples of all histories that are
written of them.

Rebecca.
Gen. 27.

For who euer heard of the lyke pru-
dencie as was in Rebecca Isaacs wife for
to cause hir sonne Iacob to chayne and
get his fathers blessing, the which y fa-
ther was determined to bestow vpon his
eldest sonne Esau. Lykewise what prude-
cye the man is found lyke vnto the pru-
dent wif of Abigail of whom the historie
sayeth That Dauid beeing in the wilder-
nesse of Pharan, sent certeyne of his ser-
vants to Nabal who was a man of great
possessions and very rich; to him sent Da-
uid for pittels, but Nabal beeing a man

Abigail
1. Kings. c2.
25.

of

of a churlysh nature spake euil of Dauid
and his seruaunts saying, that he neither
knew them nor their master, and willed
them to sake vittels in some other place.
The young men beeing ashamed return-
ed towarde Dauid and tolde him the
churlysh and proude aunswers that Na-
bal had giuen them, wherewith Dauid
beeing moued (and not without a cause)
determined to be revenged, and willed
his seruaunts to girde their sworuds and
followe him, saying: In dayne haue
I kept this churles shēpe from perill in
the wildernesse to be requited after this
manner. But Abigal hauing knowledge
what answere Nabal had sent, & how he
had refused to giue him and his foode, she
most prudely considered y Dauid would
therewith be moued and take vengeance;
Therefore she went to meeke Dauid and
sent him vittells according to his re-
quest, and excusing the foolysenesse of
Nabal, she did most humbly desire David
to pardon this faulke, the which he had
committed more for want of wit then of
malice. And that shēe his pore seruaunt
and handmaide had caused to be brought
all

The prude
cie of A.
bigal

Praise

The praise, and

all such prouisiō as his mē had required.
Wherē oft David greatly thanked God,
that had giuen so wise & so prudent ad-
uise to Abigal, to come before & to staye
him frō the executing of his wrath, or els
wold he haue killed Nabal & al his house-
hold. By þ wise & prudēt saying of a ver-
tuous woman of Thekoā, the same Da-
uid called again his sonne Absalon from
exile. And also god by the counsayle and
prouidece of a wise woman deliuereſ the
citie of Abel, besiegēd by Joab, as appea-
reth in the 20. chapter of the seconde of
the Kings. Likewise Ionathas and Ahi-
maaz were preserued by the prudencie of
a woman, that hid them in a well where
was no water, & so were they sauēd from
the fury of Absalon and his seruaunts
that sought them to put them to death.
And þ same David was sauēd from the
hands of his great enemy king Saul, by þ
prudencie & wiſdome of Micol his wife,
whō having knowledge that Sauls ser-
uauntes were in the countrey for to kill
David, she fained that David was in his
bed ſick, & put an Image covered with
Goates ſkins in his place, & whilſt that

2.kings. ca.
14.

Cap. 20.
Cap. 17.

Micol.
1.king. cap.
19.

the

the messengers were returned to tel Saul y David was sick, Micol let him downe thowen a windowe in a basket, & so was saued. But we wil leauue the examples of the prudencie of women in the olde law, & speake of thse y are of latter memory. And as I judge ther is no prudency that doth passe the prudency of Pulchria, sister unto Theodosius the Emperour of least years, who perceiving hir brother wout respect and foresight to seale all kinde of letters & commissions y were presented unto him without perusing or enquiring the effect, or what they did conteine, shre invented a pollicie ful of great prudency and urbanite, for to correct & reprove that fault & imperfection. For by a secretary she caused a letter to be made, y contents whereoff was, y Eudocia who was wife to Theodosius, shold be deprived of liber-
tie & dignitie, & brought into seruitude & bondage, y which letter she presented unto y Emperour hir brother for to signe, who according to his custome signed it presēt ly, & did not loke win what the contents were, then Pulchria opened y letter, and read unto hir brother what it did conteine,

whereat

The great
prudencie
of Pulchria

Praise

The praise, and

whereat the Emperour was greatly abashed, and this meanes thonghe the prudency of his sister, from thence forth he never signed letters nor commissions before that first he vnderstode the effect and meaning theroff.

Peter Crynnit a French writer sheweth and Hormisda beeing prisoner and finding no meanes to escape, vntill his wife found a politicke inuention, in sending him to the prison a great fish in the belly wheroff there was a fyell, and she sent him word that he himselfe shoulde dresse the fish, and also she sent unto the keepers of the prison the best wine she could get, by which means he fyelled off his yrons, and chaunged garment with him that brought the fish, and thus his keepers beeing druncken, he escaped thorough the prudent inuention of his wife.

Valerius repeateth a history in manner like unto this, of the Menians, which wer a people of the Iland of Lemnos, from whence beeing chased and driven by the Pelaskians, they retayred & fled into Lace-demonia, where they were gently received, but after that they were acquainted

The Menians
wives.

ted with the countrey and with the na-
ture of the people; they practised secretly
amonge themselves to expulse and drave
out the Lacedemonians, for the which
cause these Mençans were taken pris-
oners, and whiles they were in prison,
their wifes came to visit them, and they
chaunging apparell and garments with
their husbands, remained themselues in
prison, and their busaydes founde the
meanes to get out & escape being in their
wifes rayment, and so they sauod them-
selves.

The wife of Fernand de Gonzaga,
Earle of Castilla, came to visite her hus-
band in prison, unto whom shee gave her
garment and attyre for to escape & save
herselfe, and shee tooke her husbandes ap-
parell & remained in prison in his stead,
puttinge her selfe in daunger for him
to bereoff when the kinge of Castil had
knowledge, consideringe the prudencie
of this woman, and her charitable hor-
tures for her husband, he pardoned them
both.

But amongst v. prudencies wherwith
women are indued, the prudency of the

V. wife

The praise, and

The history
of Pithias of
Lidia.
Plutarch
in his booke
of illustri-
ous women.

wife of Pithias of Lidia is very won-
derfull. For she seeing her husbande and
his seruaunts, to occupie the most part of
the time; and so bestowe it in digginge
golde out of the mines, & because of that,
husbandy and tilling of the ground was
left off & the mines was altogether their
exercis, therfore for to correct & reprove
this oversight and couetousnesse in her
husband, she vised a great prudcny wor-
thy of remembraunce.

For upon a time when her husbande
was gone to get golde out of his mines,
against his retourne, shee caused the ta-
ble to be spread al of gold, vpon whiche
shee set the similitudes and pictures of
all such kinde of meates as shee knewe
her husbande to loue and to delight in,
all the which was of cleane golde.
Wherewith Pithias dyd delight hym
selfe wonderfully for a time, and satis-
fied his eyes, but his bellye was not
therewith satisfied nor filled, so that
haueing a hungered, commaunded his
wife to bring him some meate, then
she presented unto him other shewes and
pictures of meate, for to beholde & gaze
at,

at, but not soz to eate, soz beeing of cleane golde they were to harde to digest whereon when Pithias had longe looked and satisfied his eyes, beeing weary with the sight theroff, and having great hunger, hee commaunded againe that they shold bring him some meate: for he was weary with such sights, the which dyd not fill the stomacke. Then his wise and prudent wife, dyd declarc and shew unto hym, that whilast that he was so givyn to gather together and horde vp gold, his hondrye was neglected and layde aside, which woulde bee the cause that both hee and his shold dye soz hunger, if that he dyd continue as he had begun. For by golde a man cannot liue, but by the reuenelues of his land hee might well liue, by improving it to the best value; & that he ought better to esteeme & praise y mine of corne, then y mine of gold. And thus by this civil prudencie, she wdroen her hysband, frō y unsatisfiable & covetous desire. If he had to gather gold: so y afterward he set his minde altogether vpō his hysband, & tillage. But if we shal leave speaking of anciet histories, & come to speak of y prudency

The praise, and

bency of some of late yeares , we shall
 finde them not inferior of praise & com-
 mendation then the others , but rather
 more. Amonge the which, Mary, daugh-
 ter unto the Duke Carrolus Earle of
 Flaunders and of Alips of Burbon, doth
 merite immortall fame : who was wife
 unto the Emperour Maximillian, y was
 a man very simple, soft, and pitifull. For
 which cause he was disdained and despi-
 sed of his Princes and Lordes , so that
 they had rather to communicate the as-
 sayes of the Empire unto the woman,
 then to the husband, because of hir great
 prudencie and wiſdome: but yet notwithstanding
 the would neuer take upon hir
 to determine vpon the assayes of the
 countrey, without the wil and consent of
 hir husbands , by reason whereoff the
 Lordes and the nobilitie had them euer
 afterward in honour and reputation.

This Mary countesse of Flaunders, and
 the Lady Loycse Dutches of Sauoy, that
 was Mother unto h French king Frauncis
 the first of that name, through their
 singular prudencie , they entreated the
 peace that was made and concluded at
 Cambry,

The prudē
cie of Mary
countesse of
Flaunders.

Cambry, whereon also the Lady Margas-
ret Vallois, Ducheſſe of Allenson, and
afterward queene of Navara, both beare
a great praise for concluding that pece:

Margaret
Vallois
duchesſe of
Alleson.

For when the French kynge was taken
before Pavia, and from thence carped and
conveyed to Madril in Spaine, this prin-
cess hauing not hit paere nor equall in
prudencye and knowledge, was sent as
Emballadoz into Spaine, vnto the Empe-
rour for the delivery of the king hit b̄ro-
ther. And being arayed into Spaine, and
come before the presence of the Empe-
rour, Charles the fift, she uttered these
few and pithy wordes following, in man-
ner of an Oration.

Hir vvords
to the Empe-
rour Charles
the fift.

Most fortunate Emperour, the very
cause why we are come hether, is both
to ſeke and desire peace, and the delin-
raunce of the king; and this our request
is iust & reasonable: For although that
god hath giuen thee victory, and that for-
tune hath bene so favourable vnto thee,
as to take the king prisoner in battaile,
yet is it not reason that he ſhould con-
tinue in captiuitie; as touchinge his rau-
tione it is ready, & all other things there-

V. iii. vnto

Praise

The praise, and
unto necessary. These words being wise-
ly uttered & knit by with so few words,
was the very occasion that moued the
Emperour afterwarde to yeld & consent
to peace , although that then hee an-
swered this Lady somwhat angerly, but
at the last the agreement was made tho-
rough the singuler wisdome & prudencie
of these noble Ladys.

¶ Of the wonderfull constancie of some
women, Cap. 12.

¶ GOD the very Author of all goodnes,
hath elected, chosen, and appointed the
inferior and base, and contynened things
of this world, to confound the highe and
mighty things theroff, so that whiche
here amongst men is contynued & despi-
sed, is before his maiestie most precious
and acceptable, whose bountiful goodnes
is such, that those things which are fraile
and weake of nature, he through his god
grace maketh them most strong and con-
stant, the which thing we doe manifestly
& plainly see in an infinit number of wo-
men, the which although of nature they
be

be most fragle & vnstable, neuerthelesse
 shrough the grace and vertue proceeding
 from aboue, they haue bene made more
 strong and more constant then the most
 mightiest and strongest men of. h wrold,
 chiefly in vpholding and maintaining the
 christia faith, they haue shewed in them-
 selues, not by any part or iot of tender-
 nesse, or softnesse, as commotly is in wo-
 man kinde, who insomuch as they haue
 the flesh more softer and delicater, are the
 more tenderer to suffer or abyde anye
 paine. Notwithstanding they haue suffe-
 red more then men, & shrough their con-
 stancie shew they haue so ouercome and
 daunted the heartes of Tyrauntes, that
 they haue bene sooner weary in putting
 them to martyrdome then they them-
 selues haue bene weary in abiding the
 paine & cruel tormentis, not regarding h
 debilitie & weaknes of their flesh, nor yet
 their young and tender yeares wherein
 they haue suffered martyrdome, euen as
 constantly as h most stonest & valiantest
 men of h wrold: soz who wil not admire
 & wonder of the mernailous constancie
 and unspeakable patience of Blandina,

The vvor-
 derfull con-
 stancie of
 some wome
 although of
 nature they
 be most
 fraile,

Blandina
Euseb, in
his ecclesiastical history. li. 2. cap.
2. & 3.

This persecu-
tion was
chiefly in
Lyon and in
Doulmenie

Maxentia
vict. li. 1. of
the persecu-
tion of the
vandals in
the province
of Africa,
about the
year 457.

The praise, and
a Christian virgin, who during the per-
secution of the French Church under the
Emperour Seuerus, in the yeare of our
Lord. 178. was taken and required to
forfaine the Christian fayth, but for that
she woulde not, she was made fast to a
post for to be devoured of wilde beasts,
and to be a praye vnto them. Neuerthe-
leste she shewed no countenance of feare
at all, but the more she was tormented,
the more stedfastly she cryed out that she
was a Christian, praying vnto God con-
tinually, that it would please him to giue
her constancie to persuer in confessinge
his name vnto the ende. Insomuch that
the tormentors being wearied with her
exceeding patience and constancye, were
at the last constrained to cut off her head,
openly confessing and saying, that they
never sawe anye one endure so much
paine with so constant a minde. Maxen-
tia a virgin, after that she had suffered
imprisement, with scouringinges, bea-
tinges, rackings, and other tormentes
for the testemonye of CHRISTIANIT
Y EH UD, she did persuer so con-
stauntye in this holye profession,
that

that season the Vandal that caused hir to be tormented, did confess that shē had overcome him, and seeing how shē did perseuer in hir profession, and that she could not be perswaded from it, he lefte hir to hir owne will, and sent the rest of the prisoners that were kept onely for the profession of Christian Religion, into exile, to Capsus king of the Moores, affirming that he was overcome by Maximia.

In the time that Maximin exercisēd his horriblie crueltie against the poore Christians, he employed his whole deylght to invent some newe and unaccustomed manner of tormentes, but the Christians were more prompt and ready to sustayne them, then he could finde meanes to invent them, in such manner that he found himselfe not onely vanquisched and overcome of men, but also for þ most part of women which had embraced þ faith of Christ with such a seruēt zeale, þ when they were apprehēved as women, they shewed themselves mightie and stout as men, contēting rather to suffer death, then once to thinke

H.b.

to

The praise, and

to renounce or forsake the christian faith,
among the which was Dorothy, and So-
phronia, so constant dames, that Maxi-
min scel yng himselfe ouercome through
their sufferance, he made an Edict and
Decree in the fauour of Christians, after
this manner following.

Dorothy &
Sophronia
Euseb.lib.8
cap.17.the
notable des-
ere of Cæs-
ar Maximin,
rehears-
ed by Euseb.
lib.8.
ca.17. of his
ecclesiastic
call booke

Maximin Cæzar invincible, souereigne
and chiefe of Germany, of Aegypt, of
Thebes, of Sarmatia, of Persia, and of
Armenia, victorius of the Medes, and
for his triumphat victories named nine-
teene times Emperor, eight times Con-
sil, and Father of the countrey. Since
the beginning of our Empire among o-
ther things that we determined and con-
cluded to be done, for the benefite of the
common weale, we ordyned, y the order
that shold be obserued and kept in all
things shold be confirmable to the an-
cient lawes, that the publyke discipline
of Rome shold be cōserued. And for this
same cause we comandres y those y are
named Christians, & that haue forsaken
our olde and auncient religion, shold be
constrained to forsake their new doctrine
that they haue taken, and obserue our
olde

olde and auncient religion that was estableshed by our predecessors. But having intelligence and information that notwithstanding our commandement and rigour bled towardes them soz to cause them to tourne, they haue not leste to follow their owne will, wherein they are so stable and constant, that there is neyther force nor Payne be it never so grievous that can withdraw them from their religion, to make the to take ours, but they had rather expose & offer themselves to most greuous tormentes, yea, & also to the death, and thus they continue from day to day, and even at this present in their constancie, without doing any reverence and honour to any of our gods in Rome.

Wherforeza hauing in remembrance our accustomed clemencie and pittie, we determine to use the same towardes Christians.

And so this cause we permitte that from henceforth and hereafter, all manner of personnes may make and name themselves Christians, to haue places for their assemblies,

The heathen
are suffered
to name the
selues Chris-
tians,

The praise, and
to edifie and buylde Temples wherin
they may use their prayers and Sacrifi-
ces, the which facultie and lyicense we
do graunt them vpon condition that they
shall attempt nothing agaynst our com-
mon wealth and religion, and that in all
other things they obserue our lawes
and constitutions, and also for recogni-
tance of this permission, they shall bee
bounde to pray vnto their God for our
health and welfare, and for the prosp-
erous estate of the common weale of
Rome, to the ende that the common
weale being in prosperite, they them-
selves may the better lyue of their la-
bour in rest and quietnesse.

By this ordinaunce and detrac, Max-
imin testifieth that the Christians re-
mainned most constant and invincible in
upholding the Christian fapth, in the
which he wanne also did persist euuen to the
last gaspe of their lyfe, so þt the tyrants
beinge weary of their crueltie were con-
strained to give ouer.

Truly, these are the great giftes of
GOD, that hath so strengthened the
weake frakste of women that he hath
made

made it invincible,

We read of Appolline a Virgin of Alexandria, beeing of good yeares, had her teethe plucked all out by the tormentors, and then was burned quicke, but she was founde more prompt and willing to suffer death then the tyrants were ready to put her to payne : For so soone as she saw the fire flame and burn, she cast her selfe therin, & this was about the yere 251. About which time y god Lady Corinthia was most shamefully trayned through the streetes & torn in pieces with an horrible kunde of death.

For then the persecution was so sore kindled agaynst the poore Christians, and faithful seruaunts of Christ Jesus, that they durst not shewe themselves openly in the day time, neither in the Townes nor in the fieldes. For so soone as any one that professed Christian Religion was seene and espied openly, incontinently the clamour of the people was upon him, and the common people would make an uproare, which could not be pacified untill the poore Christian was put to death & torn in pieces, even

Appolline.
Euse. lib. 6.

Corinthia

The christians durst not bee seene openly Euse. in his 6. booke & 31 chap. of his ecclesiastical historie

The prayse, and
as a Lambe amouest a troupe of
Wolues.

For the Infidells beeing not satisfied
with the bloud of poore Innocents , en-
tered into their houses and spoiled, wash-
ed and carayed away all that they found,
except such things as were of small va-
lue and not worth the taking away, that
they woulde gather together into some
place of the citie and burne it before all
the worlde, after that they had pilled and
robbed them of their best goods and rich-
es, but the poore Christians endured such
spoylyng and robberie ioysfully. And not-
withstanding al this, the feminine kinds
which are reported so frayle and uncor-
stant, lefte not so persuer and abyde
most constantly in the Christian faith,
showing no countenance of feare. The
which Socrates doth witness, for he shew-
eth y in Edessa a towne in Mesopotamia,
there was a Temple dedicated to Saint
Thomas the Apostle, to the which place
the christians came & assembled together
for to pray & call vpon God. The which
their doing, when it came to the know-
ledge of þ Empereor Valens (a truel en-
emy

Socrates in
his 7. booke
cap. 32. of þ
ecclesiast.
history.
Tripartite.

ing to the servants of god, & a great persecutor of the Christians) for this cause he did strike one of his Lieutenants named Modestus, because that he had not driven the Christians from y place, knowing that they were the people that he did most detest and abhorre. Modestus did most modestly endure and suffer this iniury, excusing himself to the Emperour shewing most dutifull obedience and submission to his Maiestie, and promised to execute his comauement.

Who notwithstanding being a man not giuen to bloude, but abhoring and detesting such ciueltie, did secretly give knowledge to the Christians that none of them should be at the Temple y day that they had determined to meeke toge- ther. But notwithstanding this aduer- tisement & warning, they gaue not over their accustomed use in going to y Temple to pray, specially y day that they were forbiddē. Now Modestus hating comis- sion to destroy all y Christians y should be found in y said temple, & being in his iourney to execute y wicked comauemen- t of Valens according to his commissi-

Valens the
Emperour
gave a com-
mandement
vnto one of
his lieute-
nantes named
Modestus,
to kyll the
Christians
that refor-
ted to a cer-
taine Tem-
ple.

it

The prayse, and

The zeale
of a poore
woman of
the country
for to re-
ceive Mar-
tyrdom

it chanced by the way whether, he ouer-
toke a poore woman that caried a young
childe in hir armes, who was going to
the said Temple, and she made great hast
to be there, to whom Modestus sayde.
Oh unhappy woman, whether runnest
thou so vnadvisedly, she aunswered him
very boldely, I hast me to the place whe-
ther a greate many others are gone be-
fore, that is vnto the Temple and Con-
gregation of Christians. Why sayd the
Lieuetenant Modestus, hast thou not
heard that the President commeth to kil
& destroy all those that shall be founde in
the sayd Temple, according to the Em-
perours commaundement.

The woman aunswered him agayne
and sayd . I haue heard tell of such a
thing, and that maketh me to make the
moore hast to be there in the company of
those that wil assemble themselves ther.
When the President asked her whether
she caried the lyttle childe, she aunsw-
ered, I beare it even to the very same
place for to receiue Martyrdome with
the rest.
Modestus seing the great confiancie
of

of that woman, nothing fearing death & the desire that she had to suffer for the name of Jesus, he went back againe, and did not accomplish the thing that he had enterprised to doe, for his presence was utterly to have destroyed and murthered all the Christians that shuld be found in the said temple, but he returned to the Emperour Valens, shewinge vnto him that he woulde rather suffer death him selfe, then to execute that charge whiche he had given him, and he declared to the Emperour all that this pore womā had awnswered him: in such manner that he turned the Emperours minde from executing so horrible and haynous a fact, & thus was he renoked & called backe from the crueltie that he thought to have committed, through the wonderfull constancie and boldnesse of this woman that was willinge with hir childe to receive martyrdome without any feare of death.

But who ever hearde speake of so stoule and noble a heart , as was in Tharbua, sister vnto Symon the Arch^t bishopp^e of Selucia, who by no meane^s

I. could

Modestus
vwas lette d
from execut
ing his en
terprise tho
rough the
constancy of
this vveake

Praise

The praise, and

could bē perswaded to tourne & renouke
the loue that she had to Christ Jesus hir
spouse, neither by prayers, nor by sayze
promises, nor yet by any straunge kinde
of tormentes that were put to hir, but
that shē persevered alwayes, euen vn-
till the last gaspe of hir breath, in the
sayth and Christian religyon, for she be-
ing demaunded and asked, whether that
she would not follow the religion of hir
natural Lord, the king Sapor, she would
by no meanes consent thereto, know-
ing that the right way to live, was not
to dissemble nor faine, when it was que-
stion to speake in the cause and quarell
of hir God, the whiche to mainteine, shē
must feare no kinde of torment, no not
death it selfe, for it was euerlasting death
to deny Christ to the worlde. And thus
she persevered in this holy minde, euen
to suffer death, yea, the most cruellest
that might bē devised. For shē with
a mayde seruant of hirs, were accused
to bē Sorcerers and Witches, and
therefore they were both bounde fast
to a poast and most cruelly and tyran-
nously were sawcd thorough the myds-

The invinci-
ble constan-
cie of Thar-
bus.

The most
cruell and
painefull
death of
Tharbua &
hir maide.
Historia tri-
partita.lib.3
caput.2

delt of their bodyes with Hawes , the whiche they endured and suffered most patiently and constantly, without shewing either in countenance or gesture, any feare or faintnesse, duringe so horribble and detestable a torment.

¶ the rare and wonderfull patience,
 ¶ the sufferance, worthy of cuerlasting remembraunce, ¶ constancie , whereoff the lyke cannot bee founde else where. For what stony hart wil not bee mollyfied to heare this, or whose haire wil not stande vp, to heare such a cruell martirdom rehearsed . What can the detractors of women saye vnto this, but that they must confesse in despight of their beardes, that this kinde is as constant, as patient, and as stoute in sufferaunce, as the virill sort . For although the nature of women(as Chrisostome sayth) is to beare great affection to their children, and to purchesse for them goods, wealth, honour, & dignitie, and desire to see them great & mighty in this world , neuerthelesse ther are found an infinit sort, of god and vertuous Mothers, the which doe forgette this foolish naturall affection,

The praise, and

and couet and wish rather to addozne &
furauish their children,with þ knowledge
and feare of God,& wish no other thing
to them, but that they shuld perseuer in
the loue and feare of God,& in the sayth
of Christ Iesus.Such was the god and
vertuous lady Augusta, mother to Sim-
Augusta the
mother of
Impheian
phorian, who through hir vertuous and
wise admonition and counsaile, moued &
firred by hir onely sonne to receive mar-
tyrdome, so to mainteine christian reli-
gion. And vnder the Empire of Adrian,
a sage and wise lady named Sophia, did
put into graue & bury thre of hir owne
daughters with hir own hands, þ which
to hir great consolation and comfort, shee
sawe suffer death for the testimonys of
Christ Iesus,& in the Annals of Fraunce
Blanch mo-
ther to saint
Loyes.
ye may read of the Lady Blanch,mother
vnto king Loyes,otherwise called Saint
Loyes,she would oftentimes say that she
had rather se hir beloved sonne dye,then
that hie shoulde wittingly and willingly
offend God,& transgresse his comande-
ments. But if I shoulde stand to rehearse
all suche historyes as speake and de-
clare the constancie of vertuous women,

I shoule haue sufficient matter for to
make a greate volume. Therefore I will
ende this matter, with the vnspeakable
constancy of þ seven Machabees, through
the instigation & persuassion of their her-
tuous mother, who taught them not the
doctrine that the Magarenes vse to teach
their children, that is, to gather & hurde
þp gods by all meanes they can, and to
encrease in wealth and richesse by all
wyses possible, but she did so wel instruct
them in the law of God, that for to main-
teyne the same, she saue them all before
hir face, suffer the most cruellest marty-
dome that mans malice may myghte
thinke upon, for to maintaine the law of
God, against the decree of cruel Antio-
chus, & she did so greatly encourage them
that they suffered terrible death most
joyfully one after an other, so the which
they offered themselves most willingly
with seruient & constant mindes, know-
ing that if they were through the rage
and crueltye of the tyraunt and his tor-
mentors, put to payne, that it came not
to them by ill lucke or chance, but
thoough the unsearchable promidense

The vrons
derfull con-
stancie of
the seauen
Machabees.
2. Machab.
cap.7

The praise, and
of God, that suffered such thinges to bee
for their correction and chastisement.

And this is a god argument & most
sure, that God will not suffer sinners to
continue in the desire of their owne wil,
but when they fall hee chasteneth them,
whereby hee sheweth y he loueth them,
and hath care ouer them, and doth not
with them as hee doth with other nati-
ons, the which hee giveth cuer to they
owne heartes lust, & suffereth them tho-
rough his long patience, reserving their
punishment altogether vntill the day of
iudgement. But vnto his people, he doth
not altogether wchd; awe his mercye,
nor tieuer forfaketh them, but correcteth
and chasteneth them most louingly when
they fall into sinne. This god mattene
mindinge to keepe and obserue the com-
mandements of the law, & not the kings
wil, after that she had fene the great con-
stancie of hir children whome also shee
sawe dye besyde hir face, shee in the same
quarrell, at y last suffered death also hir
selfe, most joyfully & willingly. And who-
soeuer is desirous to understand further
of this history, let him read y 7. Chapter

of þ second booke of the Machabees, wher it is at large set out, but it is time to end this matter. For in reading of histories, there can be found no better nor greater examples of vertue, thē of god & worthy women. Therefore Salomon saith in his Proverbes, he that hath a wise, honest, & Proverbs, 31 faythfull wife, she is much better worth to him then pearles & precious stones. Let þ detractors therfore, & euil speakers of seminime kunde, talk & prate what they will, but they shal never perswade me to the contrary, but that ther is as excellent perfections and graces, as well in þ soule and body of wemen, as are in men, and rather more, and otherwise they cannot make me beleue, no althoough they had al the bookes of Rhethorick, both Latin and Greeke, þ are in þ wold. For if we wil wel behold their constancie in aduersitie, we shal finde þ they haue excelled & outpassed þ Curiōs, þ Fabians, þ Camilians, þ v vomen Scipions, & the Hanibals. The exāples are so bulgar & comō þ we ned not to renne thē, as of Flavia, Euphronia, Theodora, Sabina, Amonaria & Dionisa, Romain virgis þ which haue ben moze redy for to receive death to

3.iii.

death to

The praise, and

to mainsteyne the glori & honour of god,
then the tyrants haue bene, to minister
vnto them the paine. Howe oftentimes
haue women ben the cause of many faire
and great victories, how oftentimes haue
they most stoulty & couragiouly resisted
and withstode the troupes & squadrons,
of the weake and fainte vertue of men,
they which they haue ouerthowen, bro-
ken, and dispearsed. What a company of
Lacenians haue we read off, that with
their owne handes haue killed their na-
turall children, when they haue founde
them wicked, froward, & despising their
parents, & therfore haue they killed them
as unworthy to haue so noble mothers, &
that captaine was ever so famous, that
might be compared vnto the triumphant
Chlobila, what enterprise may be cou-
red to Semiramis doings, what vertue
was ever like vnto þ vertue of Zenobia,
Thalistris, or Panthasilla. Therefore let
all such venemous tonges cease, þ hereto-
fore haue taken in hand to blame & de-
fame the noble sexe of woment.

¶ Hecce endeth the praise of women,

T H E

THE DISPRAISE

of Women,

¶ Of the first originall of Wo-
men according to the opinion
of the Heathen. Cap.I.



After that I haue long soiourned and continued as if it were in a fayre and pleasant Pallace contemplating and beholding the great vertus and excellent perfections of wemen: Now doe I begin to enter as it were in to the most filthy, noysome and unclean Stable of Augcas, wherein there was so much filth and uncleaneesse harbred vp, as three thousand Men in maner yeares were able to make: For there is founde so many examples of the vices and imperfections of wemen, that better it were, for the sparing and preservynge of hostes to passe over such infamy with silence, then to disclose and make it openly manifest.

The dispraise of Women.

It may also be thought, that in describing them, I haue chaunged my copy, and that out of the same mouth I should blow both heat and colde. But considering that the Phisition & natural Philosopher, in describing the nature & propertie of hearbs, & þ Plannets, doth aswell profitte in declaring and shewinge those that are mortiferous and venimous; that thereby we maye take the better heede and beware, as to shewe and manifest those that are good, wholesome and profitable, and although there haue bene a great number of women whose dwyngs haue ben so peruerse that it seemeth good not to make mention theroff, to the ende that it shoule not be knowne: nor thought that such wickednes might be reigning in the world. notwithstanding it is better that the memory theroff be knowne & manifest then kept in silcke, to þ ende þ good & vertuous women should not therat gase & wonder, but therby learn to eschew & avoide al occasiōs þ may prouoke the to þ lyke. But as for me, I will in nothing blemish the fame and reputation of god

good women, nor despise nor contempne their honour, neither will I take example of a great many, y haue taken great delight and pleasure to defame them in their writings, maintaining and upholding, that it is more rare and scarce to finde a wise and reasonable woman and that is strong & constant, then the Phoenix, who as Philosophers say, althoþg she be alone and singuler in her kinde, yet neuerthelesse she doth continue and renue in such sort that alwayes ther is to be founde one alwyse and no moare: but it is not so of wise and sober women, for common iesters & inventors of lyes and slanderous speakers, affirme & say, that there was never but one good woman & yet y diuel carried her away. But we wil leauie such euil tongues to their owne foolishnes. For as for me, I hold it of a certaine truth, y the woman is as well paker of reaso & wisdom as y man, & y she is as wel y image of god as y man, & also paker of saluation & undethabyl as wel as he. For in y substance of man was y woman conteined & comprehended & was made out of his side, to becōe flesh of his flesh,

bone

A wise &
discreet wwo
man as rare
to finde as
a Phoenix.

The dispraise of Women.

boane of his boanes and member of his members. Therefore that which I shal heare recyle of wicked women, I trust shall not offend those that are good, but thereby theire vertue and wisedome will rather shine the more, bëing as two contraries in sighte one of the other.

Now I am most sure that honest women will take no offence of þ which shall be spoken, of those that are euil, but they that are wicked, for that I shall reprove them, will take me for their enemy, and yet against all reason and right. But that is, because that such as are euill and vicious are lyke to scabde hors that will not suffer to be rubbed.

But now to come to our purpose and to search out the original of þ woman according to the opinion of the Gentiles & Heathen. Whis Aegyptians holde opinion, þ when that Nylus þ famous river did so swell that it ouerranne the banks and borders thereof, and ouerranne the lands, that then there were cast vp and remayned many cloddes of earth mixed together with the fatnesse thereof.

And

The opinion
of the Aegyptians
touching þ
creation of
þ woman.

And that through the heate that came vpon them , there engendered and were created diuers and sundrye straunge beastes, among the which was founde the first woman . And this therefore is the cause why they haue so little reason and vnderstanding , in that they were borne without mothers, and lyue without rule, and dye without all order, the which haue so smal iudgement, that they can never forgive an injury nor reward a god tourne.

The Grecians are of an other opinion touching the creatiur of a woman, saying, that in þ Delart of Arabia , the Sun giueth more power of heat then in any other place. And þ at the beginning there appeared & was seene one woman onely & no moe, with one onely Phoenix the which was created of the water and the woman of the great heat of the Sun & of the dust that proceeded from rotten trees when the wormes had eaten them, & their reason is , because þ women with their tongaes are as fire., and in their conditions verye rotten . For Nature hath putte all their strength and power in

The dispraise of Women,

in their tōgues, & the serpent hath not so much venim nor poysō in his taile as the womā hath in hir tōgue. And for confir-
matiō of this matter, þ Comētator of Pla-
to writeth þ the womā is a kinde so frail,
variable, vncōstant, unperfect & mutable,
þ it semeth þ nature was to sēke whē þ
womā was created, & gaue no regard to
hir, unles it wer for this only respect mo-
re for þ delectatiō & pleasure þ man hath
in hir & for þ cōtinuāce of humain kinde,
then for any perfectiō þ is in hir. And for
this cause, Plato doubteth in what rank
or order he ought to place þ womā, either
amēgst reasonable creatures or amongst
brute beaſts: for þ although they haue a
ſoule, which of nature is ſubiect to reaſon,
yet neuertheles they are ſo giuē to their
ſensual appetitē & brutiſh deſire (wherin
they are too willing to pleſe in al thīgs) þ
by vary god reason he doubteth whether
they haue reason. And for this cause, þ ve-
ry ſame Plato ſaid, þ he gaue thankes to
god for iij things ſpecially. The firſt, for
that he was a man and not a beaſt: the
ſecond, for that he was borne a man and
not a woman; and the thiſt, for that of

VVhy the
vvoeman
vwas crea-
ted.

Plato dou-
ted vvhether
ther he
ſhould place
vwomen ei-
ther amōgst
reſona-
ble crea-
tures, or as
mongſt
brute bea-
ſtes.

Pation he was a Greecke , and not an
Infidell . And Marcus Aurelius, as fa-
mous in Philosophie , as in gouerning
þ Empire spake in this maner of wome .
þeering þ gods hath cõmaunded & cur de-
stines haue so appointed it, þ men cannot
live in this world wþout women, I ther-
foze admonish yoþg men & pray the olde
men, I put wise men in remembraunce, &
instruct þ simple, that they fly þ company
of wicked women and such as haue an il-
name, as they would fly þ noysome pesti-
lence & mortall plague. For I sayd, þ all the
venemous beasts þ are, haue not so much
poison in all their bodies, as one woman
onely hath in hir mischeuous fogue. For
this cause þ Romans did ordene by their
laws, þ wome shold not succeed. And Vos-
lumnus a Tribune & Pþetez ouer þ peo-
ple, made an ordeneance, by þ which he soz-
bad, þ no woma shold be an inheritor nor
heire. The which law Marke Cato dyd
perswade the people to maintaine & keepe,
to þ ende þ the heritages & patrimonies,
shold descēd & come to þ next heire males
of þ kindred, so þ end þ the name of þ kin-
dred & stock, shold not be extinguisched nor

lost, but

The nota-
ble saying
& admoni-
tio of Mar-
cus Aures-
lius.

For to flye
and shunne
such vwo-
men as are
of a vvice-
ked lyfe,

By the Ro-
maine law
es vwo men
do not inhe-
rit any inhe-
ritance.

The dispraise of Women,

but that it should always continue and
remayne from time to time through the
benefit of the next heire male.

The Law
vocany ex-
cludeth
wemen
from suc-
cession

And among the Frenchmen, there is
a Lawe the which they name the Lawe
Vocany, and that exprestely forbiddeth
that no Daughter shall inherit the Fa-
thers nor Mothers possession nor heri-
tage, although there were no other chil-
dren.

And Pharamond following this law,
did ordayne, that no woman should suc-
ceede in the Kingdome of Fraunce, nor
rule as Queene theroff, saying that it
was no heritage but a dignitie. And e-
uen as women cannot be pertakers of
such a dignitie as to governe and rule so
puissant and mightie a Kingdome: So
also they oughte not to succeede therein
no more then they do in the dignitie of
Priesthode, in the which never woman
succeeded, of what authoritie or degré
soever she was.

The Law
of the
Gauls.

And this Law was called the Lawe
Sallique, or rather the law of the Gauls.
Which Lawe was not onely obserued
and kept by Pharamonde, but also by
king

The dispraise of Women. 65

king Clouis , Charlemaine and all those
that haue succeeded them. Now althoough
Saint Paul saith that Adam was not . Timoth
deceiued, but the woman was deceiued &^{cap. 2}
was subdued to the transgression , for
which cause God sayd unto hir, that hee
wold multiply hir sorow, that is, in sor-
row and paine shoulde shee bring forth
children, and that hir lust shoulde pertein
to hir husband, and he shoulde haue the
rule & power ouer hir. Neuerthelesse we
read in the . 27 . chapter of the booke of
Numbers, that after that the land of pro-
mise was deuided by Moses vnto the
children of Israel, accordinge to their
Tribes, for an inheritaunce : there came
to him þ daughters of Zelaphhead, whose
names were, Mahela, Noha, Hagla, Mel-
cha, and Thirza, these þ say came & stood
before Moses & Eleazer the Priest, & as-
ked them a part & portion of þ holy land,
for their inheritaunce: from which they
ought not to be put from, nor reected,
although their father had left behinde
him no heires males. So they requi-
red a possession and heritage among the
bretheren of their father.

Genesis.8

Numb.37.

VVomen
ought to in
herit by the
comandement
of god.

B.

After

The dispraise of Women.

After that Moses had heard them, he brought their cause before the Lord, and the Lord commaunded to giue them a possession to inherit among their fathers bretheren, and to speake vnto the children of Israel and tell them, that if a man dye and haue no sonne, they shoulde tourne the inheritance vnto his daughters if he had any.

¶ Of the miseries & mischiefs that hath bene in the world, by reason of wicked women. Cap. 2.

NO^t even as these that are wise and vertuous women, same to be sent from heaven for the consolation and comfort of our humaine life, wheroff I neede not at this time to speake, nor to write, euен so the wicked & peruerse sort which haue as it were declined from nature, become more worse then the brute beasts, which throught their wickevnelle haue spoyled the whole world). For who Great per-
sons haue ben deceived by
women, that would repeale thinges from the begining of the worlde, and consider how that Adam beeing indued with greater. per-

perfections then ever was any man ly-
ving, was notwithstandinge ouercom-
med with the first assault and prouocati-
on that his wyfe made and prouoked
him withall. Sampson who was the
strongest man that euer we read off,
was by a harlot ouercome named Dal-
lila. The woman hath triumphed ouer
Lothes chastitie. The woman hath trou-
bled the holynes of David. The woman
hath caused Salomon the wisest that e-
uer was, to become a sole. The woman
caused Saint Peter that was so stonge
in fayth, to denye his Master Christ Je-
sus. The woman caused Job to mur-
mure and grudge, whom the diuell him-
selfe coulde not once stirre nor with-
drawe from his simplicite. The woman
through hir subtil craft and pollicy found
the meanes to be Pope and to sit in his
seate. To be shorȝ, there is nothing found
in all the world so harde or vngaste, but
that a womans heart will therewerto at-
teine, when shē is disposed to frame hir
minde to it. And this moued Codrus to
say, y the Firmament doth not conteine
so many Stars, nor the sea so may fishes,

The dispraise of Women.

The sayinge
of the Poet
Codus.

The saying
of Medea in
Euripides.

The sayings
of Bartolus
& Accursius
concerning
women.

The saying
of the Poet
Pacuvius.

The saying
of Hipocra-
tes.

The saying
of Aristotle
touching
the malice
of women.

as a woman hath fraudes and deceites,
hidden in hit heārt & minde. And Medea
in Euripides sayth, that women are eni-
mies to all god , but prompt to all euill.
Likwise Bartoleus and Accursius, famous
Lawyers in the Columnes of the Juris-
consuls, haue not feared to leauie in wri-
ting, that all women were wicked , and
that there was no neede to make any
lawes or ordinances for god women,bis-
cause they are light sownen, and for y ther
was nener a one to be founde . The Po-
et Pacuvius, was of that same opinion,
that there cannot be found one god wo-
man. And Hipocrates writing to Dennis
sayth, that malice is as it were naturall
to a woman, the which if it be not with
speed kept downe and vnder, it groweth
and springeth vp a pace : as euill wedde
and unprofitable fruite. Aristotle in the
ninth booke de Animalibus, hath left in
writing, that as women are moze tender
and softer & smoother skinned then men,
so also they are moze crafty and wicked.
All the Tragidies of Euripides are full,
of the sleights, deceits, subtleties, & wick-
ed doings of women.

But

But to the ende that ye shall nat
thinke that none bat prophane autho^rs
haue bene of that opinion: Sirach, who
for his wisdome, was as famous among
the Hebrews, as Thales for his philoso-
phy was amongst the Greekes, hath
left in writing, that the first originall &
beginning of sinne came by a woman, &
that thorough hir, we are all made sub-
iect to death, furthermore, it were better
to dwell with a Lyon & a Dragon, then
to keepe house with a wicked wife, & al-
so it is farre better to dwell in a wilder-
nesse then with a woman that is alwaies
brawling and full of strife. Likewise the
transgression of the man is much more
tollerable, then the well dwing woman
þ flaudereth with hir tongue. And Chri-
stosome in the Sermon of the beheading
of Saint Iohn, & in the 34. Homely upon
the fourth of Saint Iohn, sayth, that as
mong all the wilde beasts, there is none
found so hurtfull and noysome as a wo-
man. And if we will diligently consider,
and read the auncient historyes, we shall
finde that neither Jesus the sonne of Si-
rach, nor yet Saint Iohn Christosome

The saying
of Sirach
touching
the wicked-
nesse of wo-
men.
Jesus the son
of Sirach.
Cap.35.

B.ij. hath

The saying
of Christo-
some cōcer-
ning the ma-
lice of the
woman.

The dispraise of Women.

The evils
that are fal-
len vpon
men by
ywomen

hath done any wrong in that which they haue written touching the wickidnes of women, for by reading the sayd historie we finde, that the greatest mischiefe that hath fallen to the world, hath come and proceeded from women, which haue caused almost al the miseries that haue fallen vpon mankinde. Example by Eve, through whose transgressio al mankinde are made subject to death. Example by Pandora, who by opening of hir bote, poured out al kinde of diseases vpon the earth. Example Helena, through whose cause war was raised against Troy, and that famous citie was destroyed, and the whole countrey layde waste. Example the fable of Danaides, that killed al their husbands. Example Dianara that caused Hercules most cruelly to dye thorough the venimeous shirt that shre sent him. Example by the history of the women of the Isle of Lenos, the whiche as witnesseth Euripides in Hercuba, killed al their husbands not leuing one aline. Exaple by the history or fable of Aegiptus, who having married sittie of his daughters to fiftye of his Nephewes, they strangled al their hus-

husbands in one night, except ony was
saued by his wife. The example of Cle-
opatra, & a great number of others, that
haue caused nothing but misery & wzech-
ednesse in the world.

So that Salomon in the 7. of his Eccl
cœlestis saith, that he found a woman
to be more bitter then death, for that she
hath cast hir heart abzoad, as a net that
fisher men vse, and as the snare that the
Hunter layeth, but he is wise that can es-
cape from hir, and there is none that can
escape hir snare but he only whom God
loueth, and that is in his fauour. And in
the same chapter, in speaking of þ scarce-
nesse of good women, he sayth, that they
are a very small number, for amongst a
thousand men he hath found one good, but
amongst all women he could finde never
a one at al. And therfore ther was vpon a
time a good fellow þ did complaine why
priests, Monks & friers (þ which he called
good men) wer not permitted to mary af-
ter þ they wer cōstituted in their orders,
& that þuns likewise whō he called good
& holy womē, were not permitted to haue
to their husbands, those holy & good men,

B. iiiij.

be-

A vvcimā is
more bitte-
rer thē deeth
as vvitnes-
sēt Salomō
in the 7. of
his Ecclesia
stes.

The com-
plainte of a
merry fel-
low

The dispraise of Women.

before named , and hē dyd wisthe that
when any good women were founde,
they shoulde bē maried to good men,
that thorough them the worlde might
bē replenished with good children , but
there are found a very small quantite
both of the one and the other, but much
more fewer women then men, of whom
it is commonly said, that smoke,raine, & a
curst and froward wyfe, causeth a man
to forsake his house and to bē weary of
his lyfe.

Three scourges sent into the vworld.

Bocas sayth, that the Gods bēinge
angrye and displeased with humayne
kinde, for the misdōwinge and faulte of
Prometheus , that brougthe the fyre of
Heauen downe vpon the earth.
They sent therefore vpon the worlde
threē kindes of scourges, that is to wyt,
sickenelle and deseases , then trauayle
and paine, and then women that are al-
ways stirres vp of debate and strife,
which is the greatest scourge of al þ rest.
This therfore bēing known & cōsidered
þ is to be sond in þ feminine kinde , it is
not without great reason & consideration
that

that Christians haue excluded them, from medlyng in the Church, and many Philosophers, haue excluded the from their schooles of Philosophie. The Jurisconsults haue also forbiden them from ciuill pollicie. The Mahomists, haue excluded them from Paradise.

VVomen
haue benei
put frō deas
ling in the
C hurch, frō
Ciuiti pol-
lacy, & frō
the Schoole
of Philosop-
phie.

The heathen and barbarous Asians, haue puttē them in the ranke of slaues and bondemen. For to say þ truth they are not sufficient nor abell to deale with such great and waightie matters , as toucheth Relygion , manners, gouernment and such lyke, vntille it bee by a speciall grace of God.

For it seemeth that they are moze borne and bredde vpon the earth, for to enterfeine and nourish voluptuousnesse and Idlenesse , then for to bee trayned vp in matters of waigght and importaunce.

And it is not without a cause that Salomon hath compared man vnto the Sunne because of his firme and stable constancie , and the woman vnto the Moone for hir mutabilite and chaunging. For as the Moone in hir conjuncti-

Man is com-
pared to the
Sunne, and
þ woman to
the Moone

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on with the Sunne, doth not appere
nor shew neither in the firmament nor
vpon the earth, but in hir opposition,
when she is withdrawne and lengthe-
ned from the Sunne, then she shineth
in hir full, and appeareth in hir whole
brightnesse. Euen so ought all women
to be, the which shoulde haue no boyce
nor talke in the presence of men, but it
shoulde be counted so[n]toughte and of
no value.

Plato his
lawe.

Amongst the lawes of Plato there is
one that sayth. Let vs commannde and
ordeine, that all such faultes that wo-
men shall make and commit with any
manner of person, may be pardoned and
forgiuen: but so[n]t such faultes and tres-
passes as they commit with their tongue,
shall never be forgiuen. For that sinne
and wickednesse, which is committed
with an euill person, is through frayle-
nes of nature, but v[er]o offence committed
with the tongue, procedeth from an en-
vious & a malitious minde. And when
this law was first made, ther was then
a great want & scarcitie of wicked wo-
men, and great plentie of god women.

But

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But now things are otherwise chaun-
ged, soz an infinite number are they that
are wicked, and very few is the num-
ber of those that are chaste and godly.

The Romaines also hauing expeirience
of the wauering and vncoustant dea-
lings of women, haue sundrye times
graunted diuorcements betwene a man
and his wife, because they perceived how
the women bare less affection to their
husbands in two daies, then they would
to their secrete louers in two years, but
it were best not to menye this matter a-
ny farther, soz as the common saying is,
the more it is stirred, the more it will
stink, & the loathsome it will be in ren-
ding a most vnpleasant sauor of y wic-
kednesse of women, specially of those of
the Antartick, who would not stick to
giue their daughters to all commers, as
maye bee read in the singularities of
Andrew Theuet.

¶ Of the ambitious doing of a
woman that aspired to the
Popedom. Cap.3.

Although

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A woman aspired and got \hat{v} Pope dome, and was made Pope.
platin, Bo-
cas, Sabelli-
ens, & Vols-
terrenus.

Although there be no dignitie in the world that hath bene more honoured and had in reuerence then the dignitie of the Pope, from which Supremacie women haue bene alwayes kept backe and not thought worthy: yet notwithstanding ther was once a woman more bolder then the rest, who by hir ambition and craftie pollicie was elected, and gouerned the said popedom, for the space of two yeares and six moneths.

Pope Ioane
wvet to A-
thens vwith
an English
Muncke in
mans appa-
rell.

This woman Pope, which was taken for a man, was named Ioane the 8. But hir right name was Gilberta, a Dutch woman of Magunce, who in mans apparel went to Athens with an English Muncke of the Abbey of Fulda, and there she continued for a certeyne time: From whence she went to Rome, where through hir counterfaiet lyfe, shee was made Pope.

But God opening the wickednesse of those holy Fathers, and displaying in dede the Whore of Babilon rightly in hir colours, it came to passe that \hat{v} same holy Pope through secrete familiaritie and

and company with some of hir Cardinalls, was gotten with childe and became bigge, the which she could not so well cloake nor keepe secret: But that God from whom nothing is hid, made the same manifest, to the perpetuall ignomie and shame of that ~~Sea~~ for ever. For vpon a time as she was going in a generall Procession to visit the church of S. Iohn de Latran, according to y custome, she began to fall to hir labour & trauayle of childebirth, & after she was delyuered, she dyed, and so did hir chide, and they were both buried without honour and funerall pompe because of this mishappe.

Since which time, the Pope and his Cardinalls doe auoyd to come nere that place wher this shame was taken, but they take an other waye as detesting so horriblie and wicked a fact. And also it is sayd that in the same street ther is erected a ~~statue~~ or Piller of Marble, that representeth the childbirth and the death of this Pope, for a perpetuall remembraunce thereoff. But for because that Platina in the lyfe of the Popes,

Sabellicus

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Sabellicus in his first booke , Eneardus
in his ninth booke , Raphael Voletares-
nus Lib.22. Bergomenseus Lib. I I . Bos-
cas and the Fardell of time , have most
playnely set out this matter at large in
their histories and writings, therefore I
wil stand no longer ther vpon, nor speake
no more, as a thing most odious and ig-
nomious to the Popes of Rome , and
to all Papists soz euer , that make so
great accompt of their holy Father the
Pope.

¶ Of the lyghtnesse and vnstable-
litie of women that can keepe
no secrets. Cap.4.

C Ato þ elder said, that among things
wherof a man ought greatly to re-
pent him, the chiefeſt is for vittering his
ſecret vnto his wife, for þ she can keepe
counſell in nothing. What is it þ a wo-
man doth not know ; for hir tongue is
alwayes walking, and doth neuer reſt,
but is lyghte, vaconſtant, and can hide
nothing

made me to knowe that it is not good to bter or declare anye secrete vnto you because of your vnstabletie and lightnesse , and therefore I cannot graunt you your desire touchinge your request, for that you can keepe no secrete nor coonsayle although the matter depende vpon lyfe and death, neither can I permit you to confesse your selues one to an other saing that you cannot hide things in secrete as men can doe . The Ladye Abbesse hearing this , was all amazed and confounded , and could make no answere for very shame, nor the durst not prosecute hir sute any more.

Aulugelus rehearseth almost the lyke history to ching secre
of the wauering lightnesse of a woman
of Rome, sayinge that the Senators of
Rome did vse to carry their men children
with them into the Senate house, to the
ende that by seeing & beholdinge the good
order that their fathers kepte there, they
might bee the better instructed in the
publyke assayres when they shold come
to gouerne. It came to passe vpon a day
that in the Senate house amongest the
Senators there was a matter of greate

cy rehers
ed by Au-
lugelus. li. i.
cap. 23. and
also by Ma-
crob. li. 1.
cap. 6. of his
saturnals.

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weight and importance, debated among them, by reason whereoff, the Senators were laeter and stayed longer in the Senate house, then they were accustomed to doe, and they forbade their children to disclose or utter any part of that which was had in question that daye. Now amongst the children, there was a younglinge, sonne vnto one of the Senators and named Papirus, who when hee was come home with his Father, his Mother was verye earnest, and laye soare vpon him to know what was talked off and concluded in the Senate house, to whome the Lad aunswered, that hee was forbidden to utter it, his Mother not content with that aunswere, was very angrye, and threatened hir sonne with bitter words, Papirus perceyuing the importunitie of his Mother, and how she had threatened to beate him, dyd sodeinly devise a pessie pollicye, and sayd vnto his mother in this manner. It was this daye thought good, & debated by many of the Senators, as well for the weale publike, as for the increasing of the people, that every man

man shoulde haue two wiues. And some againe were of contrary opinion, main-
teining þ it wer better þ a womā shoulde rather haue two husbands. When Papir-
rus had declared this vnto his Mother, she beleued hir sonnes saying, by reasō
wheroff without any longer delaye, she sent word vnto other women of Rome,
þoȝ to prouide a remedye & to withstand
and let that men in no wise shoulde haue
two wiues, but rather that euerye ws-
man might haue two husbands, in such
manner, that the next daye in the mor-
ninge, the Matrones of Rome gath-
red themselves together, and came to
the gate of the Senate house, beseech-
ing the Senators not to ordene and
make a lawe so vnesortable and vniust,
as to mary two wemen to one man, but
it shoulde much better for them to or-
deine & appoinete the contrary. At which
wordes þ Senators were greatly abashed
not knowing what their wiues ment by
uttering such wordes, vntill that young
Papirus did resolve them of their doubt,
declaringe vnto the in the open Senate,
what his Mother hadde asked him,

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The praise
of young
Papirus.

and how for feare of hir hee was constrained to inuent this newe devise and mery deceite. For the which the young man was greatly commended and praised of all the whole Senate, and the great lightnesse and vnstable dealing of his mother was manifestly knowne vnto all the worlde; for the which, she deserued as much blame and reproch, as hir sonne obtained honour in not reuealing nor utteringe the secret of the Senate: which ought not to bee opened nor reuealed.

An other
historie of
Octauius
Cezar & of
Fulvius.

Octauius the Emperour did vpon a time reueale and vtter a very great secrete vnto a friende of his named Fulvius, who opened the same vnto his wife, the which whē it came to the Emperours knowledge, hee was verye angrye, and greatly blamed Fulvius the Senator, declaringe vnto him that it was greate reproche and ignomye to him for ever, in that hee coulde not no better keepe counsayle nor refrayne his tonge. For the which Fulvius was so sorry and agreued, that for the very same cause hee determined to kill himselfe, and

and so hē went home and sharplye reproved his wife, for the slander and shame that shē had done unto him.

But in stede of comfort shē made him this aunswere, sayinge, that agaynst all wronge and right hē was offended with her, consideringe that since the longe time that they had lyued together in the societie of wedlocke, hē ought to haue knowne her naturall and lyght complection, the whiche if hē dyd knowe, hē shoulde not haue abused his knowledge, neyther haue put anye confidence or trust in her, for the whiche cause not longe time after his wyfe killed her selfe, and her husbande Fuluius in lyke manner killed himselfe by her, and thus happened it unto them, in that they coulde not keape secrete that which was revealed unto them.

There are founde divers other examples of the lyght and unyoncousnes besinges of women whiche shoulde be very longe to rehearse. Wherefore I dare that will trye and knowe if their wifes be secret and can keape countagre, vbe accustomedably vse to doe as those that

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trye a new vessell, the which first they will fill with water to trye whether it will runne or leake, and not with wine, or any other precious likor, because that the experiance and tryall shall not cost much; although it wast and runne out.

Cuen so they that mistrust the light and vnsitable dealinges of women doe think and invent some straunge devise, by the which they assaye and trye their faufulness before they will committe any secret truthe to their knowledge and hearing.

¶ Of the great curioſitie and curious ſuperfluicie of wifes apparell.

Cap. 5. ¶ ¶ ¶ ¶ ¶ ¶ ¶ ¶ ¶ ¶

Saint Peter, who was one of the chiefeſt of the apoftles, and a piller of the Church, doth rebuke and commande wifes to kee decent and comelye in their apparell, and that they shoulde not bee in outward shewe with broidered haire and hanging on of golde, or puttting on of gorgious apparell, but that they shoulde decke and furnishe themſelues

selues with vertue. And for this cause
 God threateneth the women of Hieru-
 Salem, that with their superfluous & cost-
 ly ornamenteſ did excede. For by the
 Prophet Esay it is sayde, because that
 þ daughters of Hierusalem walke with
 stretched out neckes, and with vaine
 wanton eyes, ſeinge also they goe trip-
 pinge ſo nicely with their ſtepe: There-
 fore will the Lord ſhame the headeſ of
 the daughters of Syon and Hierusa-
 lem, and diſcouere their shame. And he
 will take awaie the gorgiouſneſſe of
 their apparell, their ſpanges, theineſ,
 partellets and collars, their bracellets,
 houes, and goodly flowred & embroide-
 red rayment, their broches and head-
 bandes, rings and garlandes, their haly-
 day clothes, bayls, kerchieſes, pins, glas-
 ſes, cypresses, bonyets & laches, & in ſtead
 of good ſmeſ, they ſhall haue ſtinke, & for
 girdels, cords, & loſe bonds, & for the cur-
 led haire, baldnes, for a ſtomacher, ſark-
 cloth, for beauty witherednes & ſunbur-
 ning. Now to a comon waight þ ought to be
 wel gouerned & ruled, ther can haue noſ
 ſome no greater harare nor inconueniente

Hovv God
 threateneth
 the vromē
 of Hierusa-
 lem.
 Esay.3.

hōuris

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Honestie
sterie and
shamefast-
nesse ought
to be y^e ve-
ri crnamēts
of vertuous
vwomen.

then by such excesse and curios super-
fluitie of apparell, for honestie & shame-
fastnesse ought to be the very ornaments
of god and vertuous women, and not
rich attire and precious Jewels, through
the whiche they drawe the heartes of
young men, nourishing and entartaining
their concupisence, kindling & enflaming
their desires, for although they doe no
harme to themselves, yet is it most sure
that they spoyle and hurt others, and al-
though they be chaste & honest, notwithstanding
their garniments and decking vp
of themselves is a token of dishonestie,

The saying
of S. Cyprian
as Saint Cyprian doth witnesse, saying,
that such vndecent and vaine rayment,
and costly attire is not decent nor comely,
but for light and vaine women, whiche
thorough their paintings and prickinge
vp of themselves, do disguise and trans-
figure that which God hath made, and
alter and change themselves into the
forme and shape of Daithan.

The saying
of Aristotle

Aristotle sayth, that it is most decent
and fit for women to be sober & comely
in apparell, and to use garments of lesse
value and price then the lawes hath or-
deined,

deined, because that neyther the excellencie of beautie, neyther costly garments, nor aboundinge of Jewels or gold nor pretious stones, doth not giue so great prayses vnto women, as to vse a modest meane in such things and to haue a care and studie howe to lyue well.

And the Philosopher Demochares sayd, that the fairest ornamēt and decking of a woman was to vse meane apparel and few wordes, and to haue a god husband. The wife of Philon being on a time asked, why she did not weare a crowne vpon hir head aswell as other Ladys, she made this answer that she was well iourally dealed with the vertue and ornaments of her husbande.

The notable saying
of the philosopher
Demochares.

The vwise
answver of
the vwise
of Philon.

Licurgus the Lawgiver vnto the Lacedemonians, by his lawes did forbid women to weare all kinde of Jewels, of golde, Silver and pretious stones, to the ende that they shoulde deale themselues with the ornaments of vertue.

Affer y the second Punicke battaille
was ended; there was published within

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An ordene-
nce of the
Romaines
for wvomen
apparell.

Rome a certeine ordinance, by the
which it was forbidden and defended,
that the women should not decke them-
selues with golde nor rayment of sundry
coulours, the which ordinance conti-
nued untill that the disordinate lust of
Asia did occupy and haunt the Citie of
Rome. For when the lustie dames of
Rome had saene and behelde the newe
fashion and straunge attire of the stra-
ngers, they requiring to haue the lyke,
as women that lusted and longed, cra-
ued and desired permission and leave to
weare such kynde of garments as they
should thinke good and necessary. The
which the grave & wise Cato withstood &
perswaded to the contrary by his Ora-
tion y he made in y Senate through the
which he shewed them the inconuenien-
ces & daungers that theron might arise.
But notwithstanding his Oration, the
Tribunes and Provouolls of the people,
being overcommed with the importuni-
ties of their wifes & with their obstinate
opinion, they obtained lybertie for their
pride, so that it was permitted them to
weare what garments they would.

The

The which afterward was an occasion
of great troubles and dissolutions: but
at the last it was remedied and prouided
for, by the god Ladye Opia, who
was the cause that at Rome there was
a Law set out for to redresse superfluous
apparell by hir prouocation, who
also woulde not suffer hir subiects at any
time to weare any garment otherwise
then the order that shē diuide appoynt,
which was such, that is, that a woman
of what qualytie soever she was shoulde
not weare nor beare about hir, in any
bordure or goldsmithes worke no more
then halfe an ounce of golde which is
the weight of foure pence.

By reason of The Ro-
meyne vir-
gins refusel
the preci-
ous clothes
that Denys
the Tyrant
had sent them
which law the women and maydes of
Rome did dissayne and refuse their pre-
cious and costly garnements and Jewells
that Dennis the tyrant of Siracusa had
sent them for their honour and mag-
nificence, but they answered that
such costly apparell and Jewells woulde
rather be unto them a burthen, then
glorye.
Also y king Pirrus set to Rome by his
Embaſſadours new & ſtrange raiment
of

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of silke with rings of golde , but there
was not one only Lady found, y would
accept or receive them . O how happy
and blessed a world was that, O happy
time worthy to be wished for and desi-
red. For now adayes there are scunde
fewe people that will haue respecte to
their facultie and callyng, or to measure
themselves with reason , but they con-
sume and waste themselves and their
Matrimony in such dissolutions and ex-
cesse of apparell so far, that Kings and
Rulers are constrainyd by their lawes
to represse such vnmeasurable excesse
and bayne and superfluous abuse,kno-
wing that one of the chiese and princi-
pallest causes that bringeth pouertie to
their people and subiects , is the great
and unreasonable expences and charge,
that is bestowed and wasted vpon ap-
parell, as wel in men as in women, the
one coueting to excede the other from
time to time, & never wil guide hor^r rule
themselves with reason, the which hath
caused great & grieuous complaints to
be made for redresse of the same , and
god lawes and ordinances appoynted

to be kept, but as yet small redresse and amendment to be seene, specially in the inferior sorte, whose licentious liuinge without feare of God & duetie to theyr Prince, either having respect to obserue god and wholesome lawes, maketh me to detest and abhorre to see it.

I remember a pretty example which happened in Fraunce to a Citizens wife of Paris which is worthy to be noted, and then will I ende this matter. Upon a time the king of Fraunce caused it to be proclaimed and forbidden that none of his subiects should from thence forthe vse to weare such superfluous & excesse in their apparell as before time they did accustomably vse, aswell in their gards and embroyderings of velvet, silke and goide, and chiefely by this proclamation the Citizens of Paris were forbidden and meane gentlewomen, and that upon the payne and penaualtie of a thousande crownes, for them that did offend besides imprisonment.

Now at that time there was in Paris a Citizen, that had a wife wonderfull costly in hir apparell, who after that

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A history
of a citizen
of Paris &
his wyfe,
whome he
deceaved by
a pretie de-
vice , to
make hir to
leue hir
gorgeous
apparell.

that she hadde hearde the Proclamati-
on and Edict , had greater desire then
before , to bee myze gorgeous and to
decke hir selfe with Chaynes , Brace-
lettes and Kings and with apparell af-
ter a newe fashion , wherevnto shē
dayly prouoked hir husbande to mayn-
teine hir withall and to giue hir money,
whō tolde hir the penualtie and dan-
ger thereof, but all in bayne : And the
more hir husbande woulde haue hadde
hir restraine, the more impoztunate was
she, from day to day .

Wherewithall hē bēing wearied ,
hē bethoughte him of a pretie deuice
with the which hē thoughte to trye
his wife . For hē hyzed fourre Ser-
vants to watch for hir vpon a time ,
and to take from hir such Jewells as
she hadde about hir, and to carye hir to
prison .

And for to execute his pretended
purpose the better , hē gotte hir up-
pon a Sundaye to putte on hir cost-
lye rayment , and to decke hir selfe
with all hir Kings , Chaynes , Brac-
celettes and other Jewelles , as if
she

She shoulde goe to a wedding.

Who being ignorant of hir husbands
deceite and subtill deuice , wente hir
wayes forthe of hir house accordinge to
hir custome, to the Church, to heare ser-
vice.

But in hir comming from thence ,
and retournynge homewarde , the Ser-
iaunts according as it was appoyn ted ,
caught holde of hir, and tooke from hir,
the Chaynes, Rings, Bracelettes and
all the Jewells that she hadde, and they
sayned that they woulde carye hir to
prison, according to the Lawe and E-
dicte in that behalfe made , vntill hir
husbande had payde the penualtie of a
thousand crownes, bicause that she did
weare in hir apparell crimsen vельuet ,
forbidden by the saide Edict.

For the which cause she was moued
and soze troubled in hir minde , by the
meanes whereoff she sent with al sped
to hir husband for to come unto hir, & to
keepe hir from going to prison .

Who when hē came didde coun-
serfayte that hē was verye angrye
and displeased with the matter ,
and

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and did most humbly and gratiouly desire the Officers to restore the Jewells agayne vnto his wife, but they refused so to doe , but persisting still in their former opinion, sayde she shoulde goe to prison vntil the thousand crowns were payd.

Hir husbande perceiving them to be so bent, gaue them certein crownes before his wife, because they shoulde restore to hir again hir said Jewels & to let hir go vpon condition, that she shoulde no more from thenceforth weare no more those Jewells nor such excesse and superfluous apparel. The which she promised to perfourme so that she might bee at lybertie.

And so the Seriaunts let hir goe for that time, and secretly did restore again to hir husbande the crownes that haue had giuen them, who through this pretie devise brought to passe that neuer after his wife hadde any desire to beare so great estate nor to weare such gorgious and costly apparayle, neyther had she after that , any desire to weare them.

This

This devise is very notable for mar-
ried folkes, that many times doe con-
sume moze substance then they haue,
to decke and sette out their Wyues
to their mindes and unsatiable de-
sire.

Some that haue written of the
manner and oder of the Turkes,
doth saye, that they haue seene the wife
of a Turke, that was a Curtisan, beare
about her, the value of thre hundreth
thousande Duckats in Jeirells. What
maye they thincke you doe, the Wynnes
of the Bascias that are Princes & great
Lordes, I leauc it to your iudgement.

The vñcre
dible sump-
tuousnes of
a Curtisan
of Turkey.

But I cannot tell whether that
wee maye give credite to it
or no, for if it bee
true they are
the most
magnefickz and most
gorgeous woe-
men in the
world.
(. .)

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¶ Of the barberous crueltie and
horrible tyranny of some wo-
men. Cap. 6.

Although that the naturall inclina-
tion of women be more gracious
and pitiful then the inclination of men.
Neuerthelesse when they decline and
fall frō their kinde,they are much more
crueller and bloudie and more voyde
of humanitie and compassion,in such sort
that when they are in authozitie , they
exercise their power so disordinatlye,
that then when they will execute any
vengeaunce, they leauē no cruetie be-
hindē unforgotton. For so much as they
cannot master nor subdue their disord-
inate passions & wicked affections. But
their choler and anger doth kindle and
burne so sore,that they become so raging
mad , that many times they enterprise
things,that the most cruellest tyraunts
in the worlde , would disdayne and bee
ashamed to doe, and they imagine such
mischiefes as Sathan himselfe could
not invent ,as every one may see by the
course of histories from time to time,
that

that wee will bring in for this purpose,
wherein feminine affections are so wel
expressed and set out, that the readers
shall bee no lesse afrayde to heare them,
then they haue shewed themselues bold
and stoute to execute and put them in
practise.

Amongest all other mischieuous do-
ings of women in the olde tyme, the ^{Iesabel a}
doings of wicked Iesabel may take the ^{most blou-}
^{dy womane} Soveraigne and chiese degréé, as one
that was most given to bloud of all the
feminine kinde, who in all kinde of ini-
quite and sinne, dyd outpassee the most
vnhumaine murtherers that ever was.
For shee not beeinge content in causing
Achab the kinge his husbande to com-
mitte Idolatrye, but made him to be-
come the most cruelest Tyrant of all
the kinges of Israel, prouokinge him to
persecute and murther the holy Saints
and Prophetes of G D D, and hee
dyd delyght so much in mans bloud,
that hee made no more account there-
of, then of the bloud of brute beasts.
But as for Iesabel, she sought to destroy
all the Prophets of the Lord.

The dispraise of Women.

In somuch that Obadias the gouernour
of his house was so sore displeased to see
the great slaughter of the Prophets, that
he was faine to hide a hundreth of them,
3.kings.cap 18.
fiftie in one Caue and fiftie in an other,
and to prouide bread & water for them,
and by this meanes to preserue them
from the rage and cruell dealinge of
this bloud thirkie beast. So that Elia,
that god and holy father, thinking that
there was none left aliue but he alone,
of those that tooke Gods part, was faine

3.kings.cap 19.
to flye even vnto Horeb, the mounte of
God. And at the last, the more to encrease
his cructie and wicked prefence, shē
caused the iust Naboth to bee stoned to
death, bringinge two false witnesses a-
gainst him, men of Belial, to the ende
his vineyard should bee forſet and con-
fiscate to the king. But the iust bloude
of Naboth so vnjustly ſhed, cryed before
God for vengeance, the which was not
denyed him. For God stirred vp Iehu
4.kings.cap 9.
the king to puniſh this wicked woman,
who caused him to be cast out at a win-
dow, and ſhe was devoured of Dogs in
the field of Iſrael,

What

What shall I say of Athalia the mother of king Ahaziah, who for that shē suffered and mainteyned in hir kingdome Idolatrye and false worshyppynge, agaynst the honour of God and his commaundements, shē was therfore slaine, for she seeing that hir sonne was dead, because no other shoulde enioye the kingdome, she kept it by strength, exercyng most cruell tyzanny, for she caused all the kinges seede to be slaine. Wherewith God being displeased, he wold not suffer this tyzanny long to continue, for seauen years afterward by the commandement of Iehoiada the high Priest, this Tygresse was put to death and punished according to hir desarts.

4.kings.cap
ii.

But is there any craultie in þ world that may be compared to the barbareus and vnhumaine doinges of Thomiris, queene of Scithia, who after that she had gotten þ victory of Cirus & ouercommened him, when she had hym in hir power, she caused his head to be cut off and cast it into a vessel of bloud, saying, now Cirus drinke thy fl, thou that couldst never be satissed with bloud.

The barbe
rous craulti
of Thomi-
ris.
Herodo.li.i

The dispraise of Women.

The which fact of hirs was so farre from humanitie that I cannot read nor heare speake of the like. For al historics report that Cirus was as valiaunt and as vertuous a Prince as any that ever liued, for he was instructed in the lawe of god by his Counsellor, Daniel y Prophet, and also in all such thinges as pertained to the administration of the Empires and kingdomes that hee gouerned.

So that the warre that he had enterprised and taken in hande against the Scythians was iust and right, for it was for no other cause then for defendinge his right, and for to repulse the violence of his enimies, because it is lawfull for a Prince to defende the invasion of his enimyes, and to chase them out of his kingdome, Wherefore it appeareth that this barbarous and bloudy fact of Thomiris, is more set out to detest and abhorre hir inhumanitie and crueltie, then blenish or deface the honour and fame of this god and vertuous Prince Cirus.

The tyrannous fact committed & done by the cruell Fulvia, wife unto Marcus

Anthonius,

Anthonius, is no lesse vituperable then
the fact of Thomiris, but it seemeth ra-
ther more detestable. For as muche as
Thomiris was barbarous both of nati-
on and manners, but Fuluia was a Ro-
maine, by reason wheroff shē ought to
haue bene more humaine and lesse blou-
dy.

Crinit. li. 1
Chap. 8. of
honest disci-
pline, & A-
plan of A-
lexandria,

But notwithstanding this, shē com-
mitted and shewed the greatest cruetie
that euer was heard off, for after that
þ head of þ father of eloquence, Cicero,
was brought vnto Marcus Anthonius,
his great enemy, he made it to be set vp-
pon a table before him, and after that
he had beheld it a long time and satisfi-
ed himselfe vpon this woful spectacle, to
the contentation of his minde: then cau-
sing it to be taken away from his sight, The cruelty
of Fuluia.
the cruell Fuluia (as witnesseth Dion of
Prucia) took this same head in hir hāds,
to the which shē did speake a thousande
inuriouse & reprochfull words, & gaue it
infinit curses, after that, shē had sundry
times spitte in his face, then shē pulled
out his tongue, the whiche shē pricked
with Pinnen and Nædelles, vntyll
¶. iii. that

The dispraise of Women.

that with this crueltie shē had contented hir minde. This history bringeth to my remembraunce an example of y most greatest crueltie of a Spanish weman; that euer was committed by woman kinde, the history whereoff is most amplly and at large set out by Bandel in his tragical Histories. This woman wheroff we talke was named Violenta, a name not vnsit to hir crueltie, shē being deceived by a knight of Spaine, named Didaco vnder pretence of Mariage, who giuing his faith and promise vnto hir & confirmed the same by lyng together, did afterwarde marye with an other Lady.

The histo-
rie of Vi-
lenta & Di-
daco of
Spaine.

The which when Violenta did vnder-
stād, how he had falsofied his fayth, & be-
guiled hir, she practised the meane & way
to get him to hir house againe, saying,
that she wold sleep with him & haue his
cōpany, & dissemblingly she made a shew
as though she knew nothinge of his ma-
riage with his other wife: So that Di-
daco being enflamed w̄ his natural heat,
did willingly consent and accorde, and
bēing together they passed the daye in
coun-

counterfayte embrazings on the behalfe
of Violenta, vntil that night was come,
this p̄orre Didaco mistrusting no harme
nor knowing not of þ secret treason þ lur-
ked in þ botome of þ hart of this blodie
Medea, thought to haue vsed that priu-
tie, (the which may not lawfully be de-
maunded but in Matrimonye) but she
did willyngly graunt his request, (be-
cause that before they had lyen together
divers and sundry times) vnder coulour
of Maridage as it was agreed betwæne
them, and in the presence of sundry per-
sons.

But she desired respite, for two or
threé houres, that she might take hir rest
and sleepe for to comforste, hir care and
the better to withstande this amorous
combat pretended. And sayning to take
hir rest, she watched the time that Didac-
co was a sleepe. Then with the helpe of
a chambermayde of hirs, she strangled
him with a coard. And being altogether
bent to rage and fury, even lyke Meie-
ra or Thesifonia, she gaue him fve or
sixe wounds with a great knife for all
he was dead. And yet not satisfying hir

M.v. fellowious

The lyke
cruelty was
never heard
that Violæ
tried.

The dispraise of Women.

fellonious heart and wicked intent nor
quenching the burning wrath that bo-
led in hir brest, she pulled out his eyes
with the poynct of hir knife, and conti-
nuing hir rage, she pulled out his tongue
and beeing unsatiable in hir crueltie, she
opened his stomacke and pulled out his
very heart from his place, then raging
and seasing vppon the dead bodye as a
famished Lyon vppon his praye, there
was almost no part of the body to the
which shee gaue not some wounde.

Finally after that she had glutted hir
selfe with this cruelle spectacle, she with
hir handemayne trumpled the dead body
out of hir chamber windowe into the
strete, that it might bee saene the nexte
day of all the passers by. The which
when they behelde beeing striken with
feare, they could not iudge nor discern
whose body it shold be, it was so man-
gled and chaunged.

• at the last this murther beeing confessed
and brought to lyght by hir owne selfe,
the punishment followed, such as shew
had deserued. For she was condempned
to dye, and executed in the presence of

thys

the Duke of Calabria sonne unto Fredericke King of Aragon. But all these cruelties before shewed seeme lyttle in comparison of the wicked fellony of the Empresse Irenia, committed to the person of hir sonne Constantine the sixte Emperour, the which was not as the others, agaynst their enimyes, or against those by whom they had receiued iniurys, but this shée Wolfe or Tygresse, agaynst all ductie of humanitie, and agaynst all naturall right, both dinine & humaine, also worse then the brute beasts, the which will never doe harme nor iniury to their young ones. Shée made the same Constantine hir sonne to dye in prison most miserably, after that she had caused his eyes to bee put out, of whose innocencie the firmament bare such lamentable witnessse, that the Sun was eclipsed seventeen daies, yea it was so eclipsed & darkened y the ships y were on y sea wer in great daunger, & y comon talke went y this obscuritie & darkenes happened for y great wrong & iniury y this raging Tygresse had committed in the person of the Emperour hir sonne.

The

No such
crueltie as
Irenia the
Empresse
used against
hir sonne
Constantine
Emperour

The dispraise of Women.

**The crueltie
of the
wife of An-
drowe
drovve
king of Pro-
wencia.**

The barbarous crueltie of the wife of Androwe King of Prouentia, is no lesse detestable : who by the helpe of some of hir chambermaydes , did hang and strangle the sayd Androw hir husbande.

**The cruel-
tie of Ari-
adus.**

But yet Ariadus wife to the Empesour Zenon committed greater felony in the person of hir husbande, who ha- uing vpon a daye taken more drincke then he was accustomed, & be.ing there- with dronken, was by the commaunde- ment of hir carped alyue and quicke in- to his tombe and graue , for to digest his wine, wherein she made him to con- tinue and farye so long that hee dyed aswell for hunger , as for wante of ayre.

**The cruel-
tie of Frede-
gunda and
Brunchante**

The thing hadde bene tollerable if this crueltie had remained only in these barbarous & heathē womē, but we read of some of late daies in Christian king- doms þ haue ben equall to thē in all cru- eltie. Fredegunda & Brunchant(among þ Frenchmen) naming themselues Chris- tian women, may be compared to any of these before in respect of crueltie, for there

there was never none that became enemy to Fredegunda, but that at the last they repented: Soz she hath bene so far out of order in the execution of hir reuengementes, that with greate payne would she be contented to see the deaths of those that she hated. And she persecuted many Innocents most cruelly, and caused an Archbisshop to be slaine in saying divine seruice.

Brunehant by poysen caused Theodoric to dye, & she became so cruell that Clothaire the seconde, for hir cruelties which wer incomperable made hir to be drawne at a horse taile and most shamefully to be put to death.

If I shold stande to describe and set out at large the cruell and detestable doings, of one now lyuing aswell agaynst hir owne husbands as agaynst others, I might of hir alone beginne a larger discourse then of all those that I haue before touched, but for that the memorie thereoff is fresh knowne in a manner vnto vs all, I will leau hir barbarous dealyngs to the Judgement of almighty G D D, but surely if hir lybertie
thoug

The dispraye of Women.

through Gods prouidence had not bene
restrayned , and she sent miraculously
into this Realme, I suppose hit wicked-
nesse would haue far exceeded Iezabel,
Athalia, Thomiris, Fuluia , Violenta,
Irenia, and all the rest before named.

¶ Of women Heretickes and of what Herisies they haue bene the occasion. Cap.7.

A mong the prayses of women that is
giuen vnto them by y famous and
learned French writer Peter Bouaistew-
aw, Lord of Launay , amongest other
things hee mayntaineth y women haue
never brought errour nor sect into the
Church of God. But we must rather
thinke then otherwise that when this
learned man was writing the excellen-
ties of women, he was so profoundly gi-
uen to extoll their prayses that then hee
was not mindefull of that whiche Saint
John y Apostle writeth in in y .2. chap.
of his Apocalips, to y messenger of the
Congregation

Congregation of Thiatira , saying, I haue a few things agaynst thee , because thou sufferest þ woman Iezabel , which called hir selfe a false Prophetesse , to teach & to deceiue my seruants , to make them committe fornication , and to eate meate offered vp to Idolls . The Apostle by this Iezabel understandeth some woman that woulde bring in some secte or heresie into the Church of God .

Now although it is rare and seldomie knowne that women haue brought errors into the Churche , bicause they are not permitted to speake in þ congre-
gation nor to minister about holye things . Neuerthelesse there are found a great number of them that haue bens Heretickes , and mayntained mch great and dampnable heresies .

And this is certesified vs by Saynt Hierome who writing agaynst the Pelagiens , doth affirme that many heresies haue bene rayzed and put forward thorough the ayde and meanes of womenne , the whiche coulde not bee without theyz prouocation .

And for this cause , he calleth them pore miserable

Many heresies haue
bene put in
practise by
the helpe of
wommen .

S. Hierome

The dispraye of Women.

miserable women laden with sinne, led
and guyded through diuers cogitations
and euil thoughts þ which are alwayes
learning somewhat, but they can never
come noȝ atteine to the knowledge of
the truth: so then it appeareth that wo-
men haue bene the occasion of heresies.

Symon the
en-
chanter.

Nicolas of
Antioche.

Marcio the
hereticke.

Appelles
and Philo-
mena his
woman.
Prisca and
Maximilla
mainteinig
the heresie
of Montas-
nus.
Donat the
hereticke
Agapa

It is said that Symon Magus the en-
chanter raysed vp an heresie beeing
therevnto prouoked and helped by one
Hellin an harlot. Nicholas of Antioch,
giuen to all filthie vncleanehesse had
great company of women. Martion that
Hereticke sent to Rome before he came
therer a woman, for to tourne the
mindes of those whome he pretended to
deceive and to cast into the pitte of er-
rour. Appelles had a woman named
Philomena which was a cōpanio of his
wicked doctrines. Prisca and Maximilla
rich women wer the cause why Mon-
tanus that bragged he had þ holy Ghost,
did infect many churches. Donat sedus-
ted a greate number of men in Africa
by the meanes of Lucilla a common wos-
man. In Spayne Agapa did guyde the
poore blynde Ellipides into the pitte and
cause

eau of errour. In somuch that saint Hierome concludeth that the mystery of iniquite is done and accomplished by both kindes.

The ecclesiasticall Historye maketh
mencion of Zotecus the Bishop of Cas-
mania, how he made the spirit of errour
that was in Maxemilla to cease, shew-
ing and declaring manifestly that his
soulsaying and divination was most
false, as when shē woulde foretell and
shew of great and perilous warres to
be even at hand, yet soz all his saying,
there came none, soz the worlde was in
peace and tranquilitie for the space and
time of thirtene years after this predi-
tion, and when this fantasciall woman
said, that she prophecie, Zoticus the Bi-
shop caused the spirite that was within
hir to cease and to keepe silence. Epiphanius a Bishop, in his booke that he mad
against herisies, sheweth of a great sus-
pition & heresie that was sometimes
raised vnder the name of the virgin Ma-
ry, by certain women of Arabia, of Thra-
cia, & of Scithia, v which women would
take a square stole, in manner and forme

Euseb. li. 5
cap. i. &c. 18

L. i. 3 tome.
2. heresis. 79

The dispraise of Women.

of a Table the whiche shoulde bee
couered with a fayre white linnen
cloth spread vpon the same a certein day
in the yeare, vpon the which they sette
bread, the which they participate among
them all, and offer it vnto the virgine
Mary in honour of hir . And this is
reprooued in them as a wicked and
damnablie heresie, also it apperteyneth
not to any one woman whatsoeuer, al-
though she bee of never so holy a lyfe,
to haue the vse and ministering of holy
thinges, but she is commaunded to kepe
silence and to holde hir peace in the
Congregation and Church of God . By
this yee may see, y women haue brought
in errores and haue bene heretickes
themselves . For when they goe about
to degenerate and fail from their natu-
ral inclination, and giue ouer themselues
to their owne affections , they become
not onely equall to men in superstition
and in other thinges, but also
they haue farre exceeded and
outpassed them in all
kinde of here-
sies.

• Of

¶ Of the vnaust and loose lyfe of some
women. Cap. 8.

We are now farre entered into the
filthy and unclean stable of Augeas,
seeing þ we are come to the lothsome and
vnaust life of some women, þ which al-
though they haue the key of honour in
their hands, yet neuertheles leauing ho-
nor and forgettng the duetie of their
conscience, they let themselues be led &
guided where vertue & reason is repug-
ned and rejected. In such manner þ the
fame of their lewde living is come and
spread euен in this age, wherin there are
found so many wome, that haue set their
honour at naught, & left it at randal, and
are become so vncorinet, þ if all þ parts
and members of my body were conuer-
ted & turned into tonges, it shold not
be for al that, sufficient for me, for to ex-
presse the least part of their vnaust and
wicked doings, specially of those þ plant
hornes in their husbandes heades, of
whose craftie and deceiptfull dealinges,
Bocas in the seauenth Iornall of his
Decameron, hath so at large spoken off,

The dispraise of Women.

as by his instruction it appeareth, there be many such lyke, whether it bee eyther thorough loue or to auoyde anye slaunder, lyke to the women of America, that goe stark naked without any shame. But before I take in hand to speak of those in our time, I wil first declare and shew the disordinate loues of some in times past, to see who haue excelled others in such kinde of folly.

Phrinia by
giving ouer
hir body to
whoredom
got such a
sum of mo-
ney þ she
offered to
build the
walls of
Thebes.

And first I will beginne with the fayre Phrinia, who thorough the loose-nesse of hir body, and giving it ouer to fleshly desires, dyd get and gather to-gether such a summe & masse of Moneys þ she offered to repayre and builde vpp the great length of the walles of the Citi-tie of Thebes, the which in circuite and compasse hadde one hundred gates. This I say shee offered, without asking any other recompence of the Citizens, but onely that they woulde suffer hir name to bee engrauen for a memozye of hir doowinges in certeyne places of the wall, with this devise and saying.

Alexander hath thowne downe, and
Phrinia hath builded vp.

It is a thing no lesse to be wondred
and meruayled at, the which Herodotus
sheweth, that one of the Piramides of
Aegypt, was edified and builded of the
gaine that proceded of the unchast body
of the daughter of king Cleops, who de-
maunded no other thinge of them that
laye with her, but onely one stome.

One of the
Piramides
of Aegypte
was edified
vwith þ mo-
ney þ pro-
ceeded of þ
impudicitie
of a young
vwoman,

But who woulde not meruayle of
those, that coulde make the most reno-
med Philosophers in þ wrold to swarue
and fall. For Socrates was not so well
armed with his science, that he coulde
keep hymselfe from amorous flames and
passions that Aspasia the harlot did pre-
sent vnto him.

Socrates &
his Aspasia.

Archenasia after that shee had giuen
ouer her selfe in her youth to all com-
mers, and beeing forsaken in her age, she
coulde for all that so flatter & blinde the
eyes of the diuine Plato, that he not one-
ly loued her, but also lamented that
he could not ryd hymselfe and absteine
from louing so olde & withered an har-
lot. And Hermia did so well enflame Ar-
istotle in her loue, that he consumed by
the sight of her, when he was with her.

Plato & his
Archenasia.

Aristotle &
his Hermia.

The dispraise of Women.

Lais.

Lais the most renomed harlot that ever was, woulde vaunt and make hir boast , that the most famous Philosophers went to hir schole and became in loue with hir, for shē was so perfectly accomplished with beautie and other graces and fauours of nature, and shē dyd sing so plasauntly , that there was no man but was rauished with hir voice and beautie, the which shē shewed and gaue to vnderstand by experiance, when shē so charmed king Pythus and other great and mightie Lordes , that they consumed and dyed by hir , and shē so well knew how to profite by hir loues, that shē so polled hir louers that shē left them nothing but onely their voyces for to declare their passions. This Lais was daughter to a Priest of the Temple of Apollo, who was so expert in magick, that strayght after the byrth of his daughter, he foreshewed hir perdition.

Flora.

The Italian Flora, who was young faire and rich, for that she put hir honor and gaue ouer hir bodye to those that would pay wel, & not to common people,

but

but onely to Princes and great Lordes,
the which she deceived and caught them
in hir net by the sweetnesse of hir elo-
quence, & she at hir gate had a table hang-
ing wherin was written, King, Prince,
Dictator, Cōsul, Censour, Bishop, & Due-
stor, may enter herein. Also Lamia ha- Lamia,
ving cast hir wanton eye vpon king De-
metrius, she so caught him in hir snare,
þ þe liued onely thorough hir, insomuch
that he forsaked his wife Euxonia for to
follow this amorous harlot Lamia.

But what shal we say of þ unshame-
fast and detestable doinges of Anila, of Anila,
whom it is sayd that Eumedes solde his
beale flesh deerer in his Shambels, then
this infamous and shamelesse harlot did
the innocent virgins in hir house. How
lothsome is it to heare speake of þ impu-
dicity of Thuringia, who vpō a day wold fall to counting of hir louers, & for that she could not count them with hir fin- gers, she called for a bushell of pease to count them with. I will leauue speaking of Pasiphila, Nico, Gnathena, and innumerable others that in their lyfe time, dyd no other thinge then make

Thuringia,
did call for
a bushell of
pease to
count hir
louers with

The dispraise of Women.

A Senatship
of vwomen
Harlots in
Rome.

profe and tryall of what temper þ darts
of loue were, the whiche suffered them-
selues to take roote in unlawfull & dis-
honest loue, that the fruit that proceeded,
became altogether þ corrupting of their
persons, and nowe will I say somewhat
of the impudencie of þ Romain dames,
the which hadde their honour and good
name in so small estimation , that they
were not ashamed to haue a Parlment
and Senateshippe of women that were
impudent and wicked , the which made
lawes & ordinances touching the fact of
loue & of whordome, to the great dish-
nour of the estate of holy wedlock. In þ
which Senate of Harlettes, the chiese
president was , Semyamira, the wyfe of
Heliogabelus, the filthy and abhorrina-
ble Emperour. The ordinances and
lawes that were ordyned and made in
this diuelish and whorish Senate, I
doe abhorre to rehearse, although they
be described and set out at large by one
Peter Crynnet , in his booke of honest
discipline, for th2 declaring thereof, is so
dishonell, that it had bene better not to
haue wasted ynde and paper about it.

But

But who would not also wonder of the unchamefaste doing of Leoncia, who Leonciz: toke vpon hir most presumptuously to write and make booke against the learned Theophrastus for the approuing of fornication and whoredome agaynst the holy ordinances of mariage.

Wh^y was also the infamous Venus vVhy Ves taken for a goddesse among the olde and auncient Idolaters, but onely for that in the Ilande of Cypres, shē was the first amongst women, that inuented and attempted to breake the bondes of holy wedlocke, and caused the maydes to get their dowrie money, by giuing ouer their bodyes, a pray to all commers.

The which beeing kniwne by that famous harlotte Rhodope, she caused Rhodope. hir loue to be so profitable, that she ga- thered together so much riches by giuing ouer hir bodye, þ she caused to be made and buylded the third Pyramides of the Aegyptians.

And Thais of Corinthia did so a. Thais. uagle in hit youth, that she gaue ouer hir body to none but to Kings, Princes, and great Lordes.

P.v. But

The dispraise of Women.

~~Massalina
the most impudent
famous wmo
men that e
ver was~~ But Massalina wife unto the Emperour Claudus did exceede in impudencie and dishonour all the harlettes and common women that wer in the world.

For upon a day she went to the stewes and caused to be chosen out the most famous Courtisan that was in the stewes and made hir impudicitie to contende and striue with hirs, but Massalina wan the price, for she had susteined and endured the compaupy of 25. Russians more then the Courtisan in beastly pleasure, in such sort y it is sayd of hir that she came from the stewes not satisfied nor sufficientlye contented with the compaupy of men.

Semphronia.

Semphronia notwithstanding that she was learned aswell in the Greecke as in the Latine tongues was neuerthelesse most impudent.

Sappho.

Sappho the inuentrice of the Saphick verses was in loue with Phaon, & could not be withdrawne from hir voluptuous loue for all hir knowledge, no moze then Leontia that was in loue with the Philosopher Methrodore.

But it sufficed not those women so runne

runne into their owne destruction, but Many vali
the mischiefe is come to such ende, that ant persons
they haue so bewitched men with their haue left
lascivious loue, that they haue left vndone ma-
done many faire and excellent deedes, ny worthy
and not attayned to them, being snared
in the snares, & chayned in the chaines
of loue.

hane left
vndone ma-
ny worthy
deedes and
hane bene
made thralle
and subject
to womens
loue.

Yea the most renomed in knowledge,
and the most valyant and worthy in
tunes past. As Methridates was in
Pontus, Hanibal in Capua, Cæsar in
Alexandria, Demetrius in Grecia, Mar-
cus Antonius in Aegypt.

Also Hercules did leau great enter-
prises for the loue of Yola, that with-
drew him, and he became a seruaunt
to Omphalia, to serue hir as a chanc-
bermane.

Achilles forsaked the battayle, for
the loue of Polixena, Circes kept Ulis-
ses for going into his countrey, Claus-
dus did remayne prisoner for the loue of
Virginia, Cæsar was stayed by Cleo-
patra, who also dealt vnsaythfully with
hir husbande Marcus Antonius.

Tiberius

The dispraise of Women.

Tiberius
was in gret
perplexi-
tie for the
whordomes
of Iulia his
wiffe.

Tiberius the Emperour did espouse
and mary Iulia, the daughter of Augu-
stus, who neverthelesse was so infam-
ous by hir disordinate and manifest
whoredomes that the sayd Tiberius for
that he durst not accuse hir, neyther
chastise nor correct hir, nor cause hir to
refrayne, he went to Rhodes, and there
kept himselfe, not without great shame
and infamy to his name and daunger of
his lyfe.

Marcus Aurelius the famous Phi-
losopher and valiant Emperour, did take
to wife Faustina the daughter of An-
thonius Pius, the most impudent of all
women next to Popillia the daughter of
Marke, who vpon a time beeing asked
why that brute beastes doe not receyue
the male but at one time of the yeare, &
a woman at all times and seasons. That
is sayde she because they be but beastes
without iudgement, reason and under-
standing. Now seeing y women do for-
get God their maker, & that they suffer
themselues to be ledde whether theire
own sensuall desires doth moue and pro-
voke them, and also doe loose the bands
and

* The impu-
dency of
Faustina,
the dishon-
est answer
of Popilla.

and lette slippe the bridell, to all kinde
of vayne and wanton loue, she becom-
meth worse then the untamed and sense-
lesse brute beasts.

Wherofay Hierome repea^t An impas-
teth an example worthye of remem-
braunce in an Epistle that he writteth to
Vital a Priest, saying that there was a
woman for charities sake, tooke a man-
childe out of an hospitall, the which she
nourished as hir owne proper sonne, and
had him to lye with hir every nighte in
hir bedde, the which childe when it was
come to the age of tenne yeares, shew
was filled with such incontinencie, that
she ioyned with him carnally.

S. Hierome
to Vital.

In such manner, that agaynst all
nature and order she became great with
childe, although that Nature doth not
permitte nor suffer, that man maye en-
gender at ten yeares of age.

But this was the permission of
G D D, to the ende, that the disho-
nest and vnaust doings of this wic-
ked woman might come to lyght and bee
manifest to the whole world.

Sebastian Mansher in his Cosme-
graphic

The dispraise of Womēt.

The impa-
decy of Ma-
ry of Ara-
gon. graphie . Witch of Mary of Aragon
wife to the Emperour Otho the thirde,
who was so impudēt, y she caried about
ordinarily w̄ hir a young man clothed
in womēs raiment, with whom she had
company every day, vntil that the Em-
perour having knowledge thereof,
caused him to be burnt , but he pardo-
ned his wife.

Neuerthelesse she continued in hir
wickednesse still, & was also at the last
burned . I will not stande to repeate
histories of our tyme , of such as haue
resembled Shoryes wife that pleasaunt
concubine, whose ende was very shame
and beggery for all shē was a Kings
Paramour.

Shoryes
wvyc.

Faire Ag-
nes. neither of the sayze Agnes that was
Concubine vnto y French King Charles
the seventh , but she so profited by hir
loue, that she made hir will and testa-
ment when she dyed , that it came to
sixtie thousande Crownes. whiche may
be eighteene thousand pounds sterlyng.
and also shē made all hir kindred
rich.

I wil conclude this matter with the
histoyr

history of Pharon king of Aegypt, the
which became blynde the space of ten
yeares, but he did aske counsayle of the
Dracle for to know if that there were
no remedy for to recouer his sight.

To whom aunswere was made that
his sight was to be retouvered with wa-
shing his eyes with a womans brine
that never had carnal company with no
other, but with hir owne huss-
bande.

He being retourned to his Vallacie
thought first to prone it in his owne
wife, but it would not serue his tourne,
then he tryed a great number of others
but all in vayne.

And so manye was tryed, that at
the last there was founde but one a-
lone the which had not broken hir
saythe and promise in maryage.
Whome Pharon did take to wife, ha-
vinge by hir meanes recouerd his
sight.

And hē caused his other wife to
be burned, and all the others,
whose wynges in vayne hē hadde
tryed

The dispraise of Women.

In consideration whereoff the auctient Romaines minding to bridell the incontinencie of their wiues , they gaue authoritie to men that should take them with such a faulte , to deprive theire wiues of their lyues , the which Lawe did so tame those that were insolent women , that the feare of deathe didde affwage and quench their disorderly desire.

¶ Of women Sorcerers and of their Sorceries and Witchcraftes.

Cap.9.

Becauise that women are moze curious to search and know secrets, and more giuen to bayne superstition then men, they are therfore the moze easie to bee beguyled and deceyued by wicked sptridges , and by this meanes they ate moze enclyned to Sorcerie and Witchcrafte, through whose meanes, the Devil hath oftentymis gyuen awnswe. As appeared in Delphos, where there was a caue verye dæpe, and

and when any came to aske counsayle
of the Dracle, a woman would sit in a
chaire abone the caue and woulde teli
thinges to come, and in the meane time,
ther proceded from the caue or pit great
smoake , with thundering and windes,
then afterwards, such Dracles and aun-
sweres were registered and put in wri-
ting by the Priests of Apollo, & because
that such reuelations were doubtful and
might bee vnderstandinged two manner of
wayes, the diuell dyd the easier deceyue
mankinde and beguyle the worlde by
these doubtfull aunsweres of these wo-
men.

We read in þ Scripture of a woman
in Endor, þ had the spirit of divination
and southsaying, who called vp the spirit
of Samuel that was dead, the which she
did by hir sozcery & witchcraft, not that
shee raysed vp the spirte of the Prophet
Samuel, but the spirte of the diuell that
obtainede the fruite of this deceite of his,
by the Sozcery of this Witch, who was
an instrument for Sathan the Di-
uell.

Eusebius in his preperation to the
W. Gos.

V. Women
give aun-
swere in
Delphos to
such as coe
to consult
vith the
Oracle.

1.kings.cap
28.

The dispraise of Women.

Sathan toke
acquaintāce
vvith þ in
fidels vnder
the name of
Hecata.

Italian vvo
men þ mix
ed certeine
poissons
vvith chese
the vwhich
they gaue
to such as
passed by,
and they
vvere con-
uertert into
Mares.

Gospell doth recite that the wicked spi-
rit was so familiar amongst the heathē,
that vnder the name of Hecata a witch,
he hath oftentimes giuen answeres and
foreshewed things to come to those that
would inuocate & cal vpon Hecata. But
that which I go about now to rehearse
woulde seeme to be a very fable and vn-
true, if it were not certified by Sainct
Augustine, that is , that there were in
his time in Italy , certeine women, the
which would giue to such as passed by,
certeine poisons mixed w chese, where-
off so soone as they had tasted & eaten ,
they were transformed and turned into
Mares, and carued burthens vpon their
backes when they were loden. At Pauia
ther was vpon a. 50.02. 60. yeares ago, a
Sozcerer, the which could neither write
nor reade, yet notwithstanding by hir se-
crete Arte, shē knew all that was done
in the citie, although it were never so
secret.

I haue hearde saye, that at the Cittie
of Paris vpon an eightēne yeares past,
there was a certeine personage of
greate learninge that read openlye in
schōles,

scholes, and hē woulde certeynely bee
 clare manye times that his Mother,
 whome hē called Ichocana, which had
 never learned Greeke, Hebrewe, nor
 Latine, nor anye other language nor
 letter in the booke, yet notwithstanding
 hir knowledge was so greate and e-
 mynent in the same, that touchinge
 diuine matters, and secrete doctrine
 that hath bene hidde since these thze
 thousand yeares, and known but to the
 seauentye two intrepretoz of Moses,
 and vnknowne unto the Latines, whent
 hē founred the Zohar, whiche is a
 very harde booke written in Hebrewe,
 and conteyning the auncient and most
 certeyne and sure doctrine Euangeli-
 call, the whiche hē dyd reade but cer-
 tayne times, but his Mother dyd ex-
 pounde it unto him, and interpreted
 the meaninge thereof, and shē sayde
 that it was the spirite of G D D
 that dyd reveale it unto hir, and also
 that Bahir and the Recanari books wold
 teach him the rest. And hē affirmed
 that the exercise of this Ichocana his
 Mother was chieselye at Venice,

D.ii.

and

The sanctas
 sticall opis
 nion of a
 reader in
 these dayes
 that saide y
 a woman
 that could
 read neis-
 ther Greek,
 Latin nor
 Hebrew did
 for all thaē
 instruct &
 interpret y
 Scripturēz

The dispraise of Women.

Canidia.
Sagapena.
Aglaonice.
Alruna.

and before at Padua. But what he ment by this Iehocana it could not be known, but that some judged that it was some woman Sorcerer that reuealed all this vnto him, although shē coulde neyther write nor read. But yet notwithstanding she knew much more of things then ever did Canidia, Sagapena, or Aglaonice, daughter to Aemon that pulled the Moone out of the Sky, or Alruna that foreshewed so many thinges to king Marconir, that is to wit, howe he shoulde rule and gouerne, and before whome shē caused to appeare a horribile and grisly sight. But all these are but poore Ideots in respect of this Ichocana.

There is an other manner of women Witches, which are much to bee feared, y^e which wil give poisons to those that do esteeme of them, and make them pine to death, and to this matter Aulugelus repeateth a iudgement that was giue by Areopagites of Athens, against a womā that was accused to haue killed hir hulband, in this manner. It is sayd y^e a woman Sorcerer was brought before

Aulugelus.
1i. 12. cap. 7.
of his atti-
call mighes

before Cneus Dolabella in the time that he was Proconsull and Lieutenant in Asia, which woman was accused that shee had killed hir second husband that shee had maryed, the which shee confessed was very true, but hee himselfe had first ministered the occasion, bycause that a gaynst all right and reason, hee had killed hir onely sonne, which shee hadde by hir first husband, & that the very griefe that shee had receyued for y fact, did cause hir to worke this mischiefe agaynst hir seconde husbande, by hir art of Magicke. After that Dolabella had heard hir confession, he woulde not iudge hir but sent hir examination to the Areopagites, equall Judges and repused for the most iustest Judges in the world, who by their iudgement gaue sentencis that after that a hundreth yeares were expired, the accuser of this woeman and shee also, shoulde appeare agayne for to haue ryght shewed.

And by this meanes shee was not onelye quylle of hir Witchcraft, for the whiche by the lawes shee had deserued death, but also shee was not pun-

D.iii. nished

The judges
ment of the
Areopagi-
tes vpon a
woman witch

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nished bycause that his misdwinge dyd
merite and deserue pardon.

The death
of þ Empes-
tour Oþo
the third bi
a paire of
poisoned
gloues.

Munsther in his *Cosmographicie*
maketh mencion of the wyfe of one
named Crescence, who presented O-
tho the Emperour with a payre of
Gloues, the which after þ he had smel-
led to, haþ dyed by the force of the po-
son wherwith the sayd gloues were in-
fected.

A woman
that vvas
burnt by
causing a
king to
pine to
death by an
Image of
wax that
she made.

And Gawyn rehearseth of an I-
mage of ware whiche was made by
Witchcrafte, representinge the French
kinge Charles de Valois, soz to make
him dye and consume and pine awaþe
by a lingeringe deathe, euen as the
Image of Ware beinge sette neers
the fire shoulde consume and wast a-
waye, and this was procured by the
meanes of a woeman named Clau-
da wyfe vnto one named Panior sus-
pected to haþ a Witch, usinge Witches-
craft and soz this cause shée was bur-
ned.

And of these sorte of Witches as
it doþe daylye appeare there are a
number in this Realme of Eng-
lande,

The dispraise of Women. 100

lande, and they haue consumed manye,
as well noble men as others, thorough
this former kinde of dealinge , as wee
maye daylye see by experiance by
suche as haue bene consumed , and
there are few Assises nowe a dayes, but
that some for Witchcraft are conuic-
ted and condemned to dye in euerye
therre and countrey.

The woemen in times past that
were giuen to this Diuellishe Arte,
dyd worshippe the first inuentrice of
the same as a Goddess, which was He-
cata, and hir daughter Circes, the which Circes the
Goddise of
vvitches &
Sorcerers
Philostratus nameth the Goddess of
diuinations , to the whiche also their
Sister Medea was not vnequall.

Likewise in Rome this venomous
and poysoned Arte was so powred out,
in the dayes of the Consulles Marcus
Claudius, Marcellus , and Titus Vale-
rius, that as (witnesseth Orosus) there
was . 380. Matrones of Rome con-
demned to dye , bicause of their Sor-
ceres and Witchcrafes , amonge
the whiche there was Cornelia and
D.iiii. Seruil-

Orosus. li. 3
cap. 10.

The dispraise of Women.

Seruillia, Romaine Dames, vnto whom they made to drinke the potions and drincks þ they had prepared for others, making the to practise the law Rhemia. Before which time I doe not finde any lawe for the punishment of Coniurers and Witches, the which in Persia is punished after this manner, that is, that they make those that are condempned for such thinges to lay their face downe vpon a great flat stone, & with an other stone that they let fall, they beate & pash out their braines, and with this paine was punished Sygea the mayde seruant to Satira, whome she had caused to dye through bir Witchcrafts, as Plutarchus witnesseth in the lyfe of Artaxerxes.

But amongst all women, the women of Thessalia beare the name, touchinge coniurations and Witcherastes, so that it is a Prouerbe and by word, when any woman is noted to be a notable witch, she is called a Thessalian, and this hath take original & begining of Medea, who as the fable of hir doth report, when she was fugitive, she left a coffer full of hir Sozeries and Magicall hearbs, þ which
bæ.

How the
witches of
Persia are
punished,

The wome
of Thessa
lia greatly
defamed for
their Sorcer
ye and
Witchcraf

The dispraise of Women. I o t
beeing sown, did fructifie and encrease
so wel; that all the countrey was reple-
nished therewith.

Rodogin maketh mention of cer-
teine women that are Witches the
which are called by vs Fayries, of
whom the Quene is named Melusin,
and it is sayd that they are desirous of
mans flesh, and therefore they eate ly-
tle children, such were Ericta, mentio-
ned by Lucan, Mirhenia by Apulcius,
and Dipsa by Ouid. But because we
haue sufficiently spoken of such matters
in an other place, we will forbeare now
at this present, to speake any more
theresooff.

¶ Of the deceiuable and false
doings of some women.

Cap. 10.

If all the deceitefull and craftie do-
ings of women which they do ac-
customably vse when they will beguyle
men, were lyke to the craftie and honest
pollicie that Mary the Quene of Ara-
gon vised to the King hir husbande,

The honest
deceite of
Marye
Quene of
Aragon

D.b. they

The dispraise of Women.

they should be worthy of great pryses,
for she perciuing that the King hir hus-
bande gaue himselfe to the company of
other women and did breake his sayth
in wedlocke , shes founde the meanes
through the fauour of a Chamberlayne
who was the chief minister of the kings
loues, who vnder the coulour of some
beautifull Lady that the King hadde a
minde vnto,brought the Duene secret-
ly to lye with the king hir husbande,
(who being abused by other women,did
disdayne the company of his wife.)

But this was done so secretly that the
King thought verely he had lyen with
some other straunge woman. And when
the day began to appeare, the king for
his honours sake would haue had hir to
depart and withdraw hir selfe, but shē
sayd, shē would not stirre one stote, un-
till she had somewhat of him worthye
of remembraunce, to testifie that shē^{hadde} lyen that nighte with the
king.

The king beeing overcome with this
honest pollicie and device, did euer af-
terwards loue the Duene his wife
praising

praising hir greatly for this hir honest
chisste, and within .ix. moneths after she
was delyuered of a sonne in the yeare.
1196.

And the Father and Mother not
knowing what name to giue the childe,
they caused twelue torches to be ligh-
ted, every one bearing the name of an
Apostle, with this determination that
the first torch that should goe out, the
childe should be named by the name of
that Apostle that the torch did beare the
name off. Now it chaunced that the
torch dedicated to Haynt Ieames went
first out, and by this meanes, the childe
was named Ieames, the which Apostle
the Aragonnoies haue in greate reue-
rence.

I would wish with al my heart that
all the deceits of women were lyke unto
this, for a truthe the estate of humaine
things would be far better.

But when I doe consider the can-
tells, crassles and subtil dealinges of
women, not onely of times past, but al-
so of time present, I cannot but bewaile
the estate and wickednesse of things
which

Cautela

The dispraise of Women.

which goe so vntowardly and cleane contrary to kinde, that man , which is endued with a gentle minde naturally, must be broughte into such slauerye and thralldome , as to bee subiect to the deceits of so frayle & contemptible a kinde as is a woman . And yet neverthelesse shee hath deceived and beguyled the mightiest men of the world, as it appeareth by Adam, Dauid, Salomon , and other worthy men, that haue bene snared and entangled by the craftie deceits of women . As Hercules that daunted Monsters , was notwithstanding ouercommed by a woman .

The histories are ful of such examples of fraudes, treasons, and circumuentionis that dayly and hourelly are committed by women, as appeareth by the history of Dallila , who understanding y all Sampsons strength lyes in his haires, she founde the meanes to make him to sleepe in hir lappe, the which when hee did, she haused them off with a razor, which being done, his strengthe fayled him.

Sampson de
ceaved by
Dallila.
Judges.13.

But among all the craftie and subtill dealings

dealynge of women, I suppose there can be none more grater, nor that may be compared unto the deceite that Fredegunda vsed agaynst a Quene of Fraunce, the historie whereoff is in this manner.

King Chilpericke the seconde, going for to giue ayde & succour vnto his brother Sigisbert agaynst the Almaines, did committe the keping of the Quene his wife, named Andonera, which was great with childe, and gaue the charge of hir vnto Fredegunda during his absence: Who after that she had received this gratiouse charge, it came to passe, that the Quene within a while after beeing deliuere of a faire daughter, did aske counsayle of Fredegunda to know whome she shold take for Godmothers to giue hir childe baptisme. Fredegunda beeing þ most subtillest woman in those dayes, did shew the Quene that there could be found none in the world so fit as she hir selfe, for seeing she was hir bodily Mother, she ought also to be hir ghostly and spiritual Mother, and helpe to regenerate hir.

The deceit
that Frede-
gunda vsed
against a
queene of
France.
Gavyn in
his Croni-
cles.

But

The dispryse of Women.

But the god and simple Duene for
quicke of beleefe, thought nothing lesse
then of the craftie and subtile intent of
Fredegunda, so that creditinge hir
wordes, shae helped to christen hir
daughter, and was both Mother and
Godmother.

go. question
2. Canon.
Peruenire.

Now the ende of Fredegundas cras-
tie intent was to seperate and break the
knotte of mariage that was betwéene
Chilpericke and his Duene Andone-
ra, because that the Lawes and Decrées
of the Romaine Churche was, that the
mariage betwéene Gossippes, I meane
betwéene Godfathers and Godmothers
was straytely forbiddon because of the
spirituall allyaunce the which they saye
is contracted by this Gossepship, and by
this means Fredeguda obteined y fruit
of hir false deceite, hauing perswaded
Andonera to giue unto hir little daugh-
ter the Sacrament of holy Baptisme,
the which Andonera did, & named hir
daughter Chilchinda.

After which Baptisme, Chilpericke
beeing retourned from the warre, Fre-
degunda very ioyfull and glad thereoff
went

went to meete him, to whom she shewe-
ed that he was Father of a very fayre
daughter, whereoff the Quene was de-
lyuered in his absence, but she was very
sory for that the Quene was become
Godmother vnto hir owne daughter.

Chilpericke vnderstanding this newes,
did sweare that if it were so in dede,
that his wife had christened hir owne
daughter, that he would vtterly forsake
hir and mary Fredegunda. Chilpericke
entering into his Pallaice, the Quene
Andonera came before him for to doe
him reuerence and to vse such amiable
embrazings and kissings as women ac-
customably vse to their husbands, when
they haue bene long absent. But Chil-
pericke looking with a frowning coun-
tenance like god Mars vpon the quen,
beganne to vtter and say vnto hir very
angerly.

O thou foolish and vnforfunate Lady
how commmeth it to passe that thou,
through thine owne follye hast soughte
to seperate thy selfe from me, and
to breaue the bondes of our Patri-
mony.

The dispraye of Women.

And shortly after he banished the Bishop that christened the childe and sent him to exile, and caused the godd Lady Andonera to be closed vp in a religious house at Mans, and so forsooke hir company and cast hir off, leauing for hir and hir daughter an yearely pension , and he maryed Fredegunda as he had promised, who afterwarde was the cause of greate troubles in Fraunce , by the meanes whereoff the house of Chilpericke was never without a disease , and running soore. And at y last Fredegunda caused Chilpericke to be slayne, returning from the chase, and therefore it is sayd:

A craftie wife, will breede much strife:
And through hir way, all things decay:
And euill will fall, vpon them all,
That to hir lore, enclyne shall.

The saying
of Marcus
Aurelius.

Marcus Aurelius knowing well the subtleties of women, sayd, that manye great and notable personages that are dead would not reuine and rise agayne for to be conuersant among women.

An

As Philip king of Macedonia, with Olympias, Paris, with Helena, Alexander with Roxana, Socrates with Xanthippe, Aeneas with Dido, Hanibal with Thamira, Anthony with Cleopatra, Julius Caesar with Domitia, & Nero with Agrippina. For the proverbe sayth, the Dre is borne to labour the earth, the Hawke to flye, the Greyhound to hunt, the Asse to the burthen, the horse to the warre, the Ape to shew pleasure, the sat Venne for the kitchin, the man to vertue and honestie, the woman to fraude, deceit & mischiefe.

A conclusion of the malice & wickednesse of women. Cap. II.

By dagly experience we doe know and understande, that when women will apply their mindes and knowledge that nature hath given them to any other thing then vertue, then there is neither fraude, treason, craft nor subtilitie, wherewnto they do not atteine. This is the cause why they haue ben excluded from medling in ecclesiasticall matters, and put by from poli-

The dispraise of Women.

politicke gouernement, not for bicausse
that women want reason & iudgement,
but bicausse it is vnsemenly, and it doth
not become them to meddle in assayres
belonging to the comon wealth, bicausse
of hir unconstancie and mutabilitie, the
which from time to time bath bene ob-
served & kept. For when that Neptune
and Minerua were in controuersie and
debate, for giuing the name to Athens,
there was made thre lawes & ordinaunc-
ces against women. The first, that chil-
dren should not bee named by their mo-
thers names. The secōd, that never any
woman should rule & geverne the com-
mon weale. The third, that no woman
should be named or called an Atheni-
ense, but Attiqua. Neuerthelesse since
that time, there hath bene some women
that haue ruled and pleaded matters at
Rome, vntill the time that Calphurina
having lost a cause and matter, for the
which she was spitefully angry against
the Judges, that vncouering hir naked-
nesse behinde, shēe in reproch and con-
tempt of their iudgement, shewed them
hir buttocks, for the which cause it was

Three aūci-
ent lawes a-
gainst wwo-
men.

The vnshā-
last & insol-
lent doinge
of Calphu-
rina, was þ
cause þ ples-
ding was
for ever for-
bidden wo-
men.

ordis

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ordeined & established, that frō thenceforth no woman should plead any cause, & ever after that the barre was forbiden them.

But hee that hath not had experation of the wickednesse of wemen, let hym reade that whiche Marcus Aurelius hath written , and hee shall finde that neuer any man dyd more sette out their lightnesse, vncostancie , obstinacie, impudencie, selfe will , trechery , subtilitie, deceite, with other their infirmities, which unto them is naturall and common, the whiche bath made this great

There is
none that
hath better
set foorth
the honor and
naturall in-
clination of
vomen, as
Marcus Au-
relius hath
done.

Orator so to exclame of them in his workes, that every man may perceine and vnderstande, that the woman, seme meth to hane bene made and brought out into the worlde for no other cause, but for to vex and torment men , and to putte into their memorye and remembraunce, all kinde of euills , mischieves, and miseryes, for the euill woman may cause more hurtē and harme then the raginge Sea maye doe with his waues, more consume and burne, then fire it selfe, more harme and mis-

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cheife the puertie can bring a man unto, more consume, wast, and spoyle, then the warre, and more to destroye and kill the death it selfe can do. For to vse craft, to vse folly, to break fayth, to faine, to deceiue and beguile, to flatter, to be angry, to pranke vp hir body, to make a bed, & to vndoe, is all that a woman can doe.

Those which for a singuler prayse of women, haue in times past attributed vnto them names, doe lykewiie attribute vnto the Muses, the names of women, as Caliope, Clio, Euterpe, Thalia, Polymnia, Thepsichore, Erate, Melpomene, Vrania. But by the like meane and for an extreme and perpetuall ignomy and reproch, they haue also attributed names of women vnto the infernall sprites, as Alecto, Megæra, I heliophonia, to the Harpyes, as Aello, Ocipeta, Celano, to the Gorgones, as Stenio, Euryale, Medusa, and to the fatal Goddesses, as Clotho, Lachesis, and Atropos, and not the names of men, for to denounce and shewe that singularly they are friendes to honour and louers of vertue, and that women in all malice, crafte,

The Muses
are named
vpon the
name of two
men, but so
are the infer-
nal spirites
also.

craftes, and deceites, doe outpasse and
excel them.

Fox the Epigram sayth.

No greater plague the an eniuious wife?
None to inuent lyes hath so good skil?
To deceiue olde & young, none so rife?
Exāple, Dauid, Salomō, Sāpsō, & virgil,

Wee see that nature hath putte the
strength in diuers partes of the body, as
the Eagle in hir bill or beck, the Bul in
his hornes, the Serpent in hir taile, the
Dogs in their teeth, the Doves in their
winges, and the woman in hir tongue.
But as Marcus Aurelius sayd, all vne-
mous beastes haue not so much poison in
all their whole bodyes, as one wicked
woman hath in hir tongue. The which
is verified to vs by the Histories of the
wiues of Job, Thoby, Socrates, and
many other notable persons, whome
the Diuell himselfe coulde not allure
nor withdrawe from their simplicitie,
yet neuertheles their wiues made them
both to murmur & to curse. And there-

strength
of a wro-
mā is in his
tongue.

The dispraise of Women.

Ecclesi. 25.

for the sonne of Sirach doth counsaile
man, rather to dwell in a wildernes
and solytary place, then with a wicked
wife, and he sayth it is more better to
dwel with Lyons and Dragons, then
to be conuersant with a wicked woman.
For to be short, there is no euil that may
be compared to the malice of a wic-
ked woeman, the whiche as Salomon
sayth, no man can auoid without the spe-
ciall grace of God.

Properceus

Properceus sayde, the propertie of
a woman is to conspire and compasse
fraudes and subtilties, and to inuent
crafes and malitious deceites. And to
the same purpose Saincte Hierome
writinge to Iouinian sayth, that the
studye and science of wicked woemen,
are wiles, deceites, treasons, and Magi-
call vanities. For Liuia caused her hus-
bande to dye, whome she hated ex-
tremely, in mixing poysone with his po-
tage.

Liuia

And in lyke manner Lucilla caused her
husbande to dye whom she loued out of
measure, for she thinking to give him a
potione for to increase loue, in sted ther-
off,

off, she gaue him Lacontinum, a deadly poyson.

That the woman is much more wickeredder then þ man, it is manifest enough not onely by the examples of histories, but also by dayly experienee. Moreover we finde not in all the whole Scripture that our Sauour Jesus Christ did at any tyme drue out of mens bodyes or his Apostles any more then one Diuell at a time, but the Gospele sayth and witnesseth of a truth, that the sauour of the worlde did chase and drue out seauen Diuells out of one woman. Also according to þ use of the Romaine Church, for so baptise a sonne, they pronounce the name of the diuel but twentie times, but whē they baptise a daughter, they pronounce the name of the Diuell thirtie times, for to coniure him out, as though it were more vncasie & hard to drue out from þ female kinde, then from the male.

And Clement Marrot, the French Poet, hath lefte in writing, that þ wickered woman may be lykened to the Diuell vnder Saint Michaels feete, because

p.iiiij.

Saint

vii. diuells
driven out
of a womās
body.
Marke the
last chapter

The saying
of Marrot.

The dispraise of Women.

Saint Michael hath the Devil under his feete, and the woman hath the Devil in her head.

VVhat becomes of
olde Moo-
nes euery
meneth.

A merry fellow bēing demanded what God doth with olde Womes, considering how the Wome doth renew euer moneth, he aunswered that God sent them into Mules heades, or into wemens heades, because they are alwaies Wome madde and holde opinion of the Wome, & become Lunaticke, as in an other Proverb it is said, that he y hath a wife, a shē Goat, and a shē Mule, hath thre vnhappy beastes.

As concerning an euill wife, it may be easely proued by one onely Helena, that caused the destruction and ruine of Troy, and of the Troyans, who returning into Lacedemonia with Menelaus her hussande, she passed by the Ilande of Crete or Candia. But when the inhabitants of the sayd Ilande knew of hir comming & arrining thether, they came from al parts by great troupes and companyes so to beholde & see hit of whom so much was spoken off, and so whose sake all the worlde almost had felte the fierce

fierce assaults of warre . The sayd Helena when she began to be olde, and hir face wrinckled , did vpon a time holde hir selfe in a glasse, and when shē saw how she was chaūged she began to laugh, in mocking the folly and rash doings of those that by so great obstinacie and selfe will had moued & stirred vp so cruell battayle for a thing so withered and of small durance . Wherefore by good right Marcus the Emperour sayde, that the fire in Mount Aetna did not so much harme in all Sicilia, as one wicked woman did within the walls of Rome.

In the reigne of which Emperour ther was a great plague and pestilence in Rome, during the which there dyed a great number of people that the Emperour caused to be numbered , where hē found that of an hundred and fortie foure thousande of women lyning well, there dyed foure score thousande, and of an hundred thousande wicked women there escaped almost all .

Of which plague and pestilence the worlde feeleth off vnto this day, for that is it that causeth the want and lacke of

Helena bes holding hir selfe in a glasse, dyd mock them that had enterprise
vvar for so small an occasion.

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good women, because they dyed almost all
during this plague, but the euill & wic-
ked wome escaped in a manner all, who
haue so plentifullly replenished þ world,
that there is none so eloquent an Or-
rator, whatsoeuer he be, that can suffici-
ently expresse and declare the malycie of
those women that least of all doe offend
in the world. And this giueth me occa-
sion to conclude this matter with þ say-
ing of Marcus Aurelius, who was as
wise in the knowledge of Philosophie,
as iust in the government of his Em-
pire, the which oftentimes exclaymed
and cryed out saying.

The excla-
mation of
Marcus
Aurelius.

Ye women which are always
slow to give, but greedy to take, when
I call to remembraunce how I was
borne of you, I bewayle my lyfe, & thin-
king how I live with you, I wish death:
for there is no such death as to lyue a-
mongst you, nor no lyfe so happy as to
shunne and fly your company.

FINIS.



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